

# DIGITAL PREVIEW

THE BIO-DEGRADABLE SOURCE FOR VIDEOGAMERS!

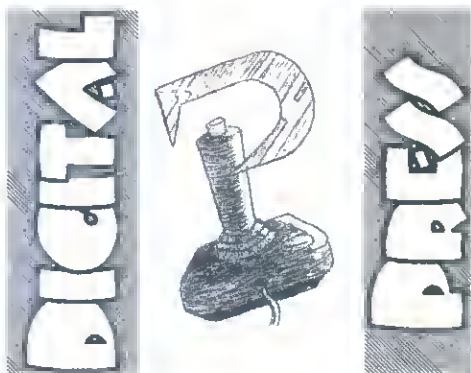


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#26:

Trash.





## DIGITAL PRESS #26 JULY/AUGUST 1995

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## TRASH.

EDITOR'S BLURB by Joe Santulli

Welcome back to the place where the classics never die, even the ones that we'd prefer were buried long ago. Yes, we've actually devoted an entire issue to the worst games ever made and we're proud of it. You have to be a little strange to work here.

Pulling this issue off wasn't easy without the help of workhorses Sean Kelly, Jeff Cooper, and Bill Schultz. Sean recently moved, and you can imagine what it must be like to haul that collection across town. We hear that Sean's family has been forced to sleep in the kitchen of the new house, so that his video games are comfortable at night.... but that is an unconfirmed rumor. Bill's having some serious back problems, and once he's able to sit up long enough to play a game we know he'll use the same injury to our benefit as he recuperates in front of his 27" TV with the 3DO humming 24 hours a day. Here's to a quick recovery, Mr. Schultz!

So Kevin and I did a little overtime this issue. We're connoisseurs of "trash", anyway. In our youth we spent many hours trying to kill each other in a game of Slot Racers or competing - and actually caring about who had the higher score in Data Age's Ssssnake. When you spend \$30 on a game, you'll play it no matter how bad it is. Back then, when I had to dog my parents for the cash to make a purchase, it wasn't easy to just play it once or twice. I had to "play my money's worth". Today it's easier. Most retail stores are so customer focused that you can return a game just because you don't like it.

This policy is serving two beneficial purposes. First and most obviously, you can exchange for a better game. But more importantly, for every return a message is being sent to the manufacturer that their product is inferior. If this trend continues, the consumer WILL control the market, and substandard products will be forced off of the market. In time, you'll see Darwin's theory on the shelves. This is a good thing for us. Don't call it a crash. Call it "survival of the fittest". Game players will always be here to spend money.

Well, the summer's in full gear and I see my grass could use some cutting. It's incredible to think that the hours I've spent researching this issue have actually cost me some of my neighbor's respect. Maybe I'll leave a copy of DP in their mailbox. Then they'll understand the long grass. The bastards.

Time to go. We'll be back in September with more surprises.

# ON THE COVER

HARD TO SWALLOW  
by Joe Santulli

The quality of these  
games can really make you  
sick.

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## LETTER FROM A PRO

Dear Joe,

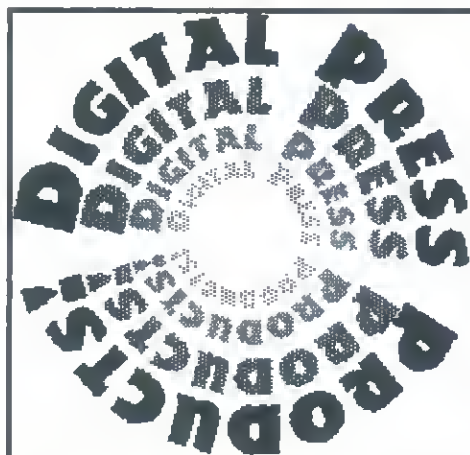
This (seriously overdue) letter should serve two purposes. First, my sincerest compliments to you and the rest of the staff who produced the third edition of the Collector's Guide. It is absolutely the most comprehensive collection of classic video-game information available anywhere! To be completely honest, I'm not as interested in the pricing information as I am in the trivia; there are little facts and bits of stories that made my eyes bug out on what seemed like every page. Call me a nerd, but reading about the fact that "monogrammed" copies of Space Chase may exist - to cite just one of hundreds of examples - makes me want to jump in my car and cruise around looking for a garage sale. The Rumor Mill is my favorite section, as I've spent the last 13 years of my life nurturing a stubborn belief that Parker Bros.' The Incredible Hulk exists...somewhere. The Guide is worth its weight in gold, and I pray that some day you will hook up with a big-name book publisher who will care enough to allow you to include color photos in a future editions, not to mention lining your wallet with lots of hard-earned cash.

I also wanted to add my two cents on the subject of one of the most interesting facets of game collecting: the prototype. I was happy to see that dollar values have not been assigned to many of the prototypes that are known to exist, and that you are now considering "bootleg" carts to be worthless, since - as you rightly state in the Guide - very few collectors will be able to tell the difference between the two. I suggest that you take this line of thinking a step

further by eliminating the \$50 premium that the guide currently places on ALL prototypes. My guess is that it must be extremely easy for anyone with an EPROM burner to create dozens of copies of any game, even true prototypes - copies which could be perceived as absolutely authentic, since many prototypes exist as EPROMs without "official" cartridge casings.

The 5200, in particular, scares me because the hardware is exactly the same as that of the XL/XE computers. I'm sure that it would be possible for some clever hacker to gather any of the thousands of XL/XE disk games, convert them to cartridge form and call them 5200 prototypes. That being the case, I see little reason to place a premium on a prototype copy of a game unless the code is somehow different from that of the production version or - as you mentioned - the game never reached store shelves. Glancing at the 5200 titles listed in the Rumor Mill, I count at least six games (Asteroids, Bristles, Flip and Flop, Jawbreaker, Lode Runner and Satan's Hollow) that exist on disk and are idly circulated by 8-bit Atari computer enthusiasts (or software pirates.) Now that I think of it, the XL/XE disk-to-5200 cartridge conversion must be possible, because - in the mid '80s - there were people who were doing the exact opposite. Blueprint and Space Dungeon are two specific examples of games that were pirated from 5200 cartridge versions and circulated on disk. Satan's Hollow is an interesting case, however. I've seen a pirated disk version, but - even though CBS formally announced conversions of the game for the 5200, XL/XE computers and others - I never saw any of these on store shelves. (I could be wrong about this, but believe me, I looked for 'em; Satan's Hollow is one of my all-time favorite arcade games.) Wouldn't it be interesting if the pirate disk originally existed as a 5200 cartridge prototype? And if it did, what if somebody took that program code and created a cartridge version for the 5200; would the result not be considered a "true" prototype, even though the game may never have been officially released? Whooo, now my head is spinning...

Anyway, I'm also writing to tell you about something I picked up at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago in 1984. (I grew up in Chicago and my dad used to sneak me in.) It's a fold-out poster-style Atari catalog that features 2600, 5200 and 7800 stuff. I had always assumed that it was nothing special - thinking that it was stuffed into every Atari game cartridge box released that year - but when I noticed that Scott Stilphen's Collector's Guide To Atari VCS Catalogs does not seem to include this particular item, I realized that it may be a special catalog that was only distributed to folks at the CES and not the general public. It has some cool



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## DP "LIVE FROM YOUR HOME" VIDEO 2!

WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU! SEE BACK PAGE FOR INFO!

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information that I couldn't find in the Guide, particularly some product descriptions and serial numbers that you may want to include in the Rumor Mill.

Chris Bieniek  
Executive Editor, VideoGames  
Magazine  
Glendale, CA

*Thanks for the info, MR. Bieniek! I put most of the stuff you've given me into the DP Guide Addendum this issue. That helped fill a few gaps I had. We've recently acquired a working prototype of Peck-A-Boo, and there is actually a working prototype of a game designed for the MindLink called Bionic Breakthrough, for your information.*

*I agree with your idea to nix the prototype \$50 premium. Actually, I may take even THAT a step further and eliminate the prices altogether - on ALL of the cartridges. There are too many problems with the prices. Dealers ignore them and charge whatever they want for the games; collectors sell their games regularly at "half the DP Guide value"; many submit arguments for why a game should or shouldn't be a certain price... it just isn't working this way. Very likely the prices will be replaced with a "relative scarcity rating" of some kind, which I'm entertaining ideas for at the moment. What do you think?*

## MASS DESTRUCTION

Joe,

Issue #25 was great and it reminded me of something I wanted to bring up to you, I've made a few good connections in my hunt for Classic Carts, and in doing so, also learned of some VERY troubling news. One of my contacts, told me why we had no new classic cartridges in a few of our local thrift stores, It's because the CRUSHER THEM. Yes you read right, I was in total shock. SO I immediately called one of these animals (our local Value Village) and Yes it was TRUE, they don't put out ANY of the cartridges they are getting in, They send them through the 'CRUSHER'. I offered to buy them ALL in lump sums, No Deal, I didn't make progress, I tried calling to talk to the store manager, and got disconnected EVERYTIME. SO the Best I've done so far was to post on my BBS (Prowler's DOMAIN BBS 509-327-8922) for more info on Value Village in Spokane here, after some questioning of over 1200 users on my BBS, I found out who owns or runs it here, a place called 'the Pre-vocational Center' So I've sent a few letters out to a few thrift store, ATTN:Store Manager. Funny, hut none have called me back yet, BUT one of the thrift store that stopped putting out the video games had a BOX FULL of titles this weekend for the first time in MONTHS so I hope to make this destruction of

video game cartridges aware to ALL Collectors, so maybe we can save a few from the hands of the crushing machines. Thanks  
Steve Kced  
Spokane, WA

*Those insensitive bastards! What's completely weird is that they wouldn't make a buck off of them from you, preferring to destroy them instead. I've included your BBS number here for readers to call into for updates. Let's get those fascists!*

## SPORT OR TRASH?

Joe,

LOVED the issue on Pac-Man. I was surprised that there was no mention of Activision's Boxing in the sports issue. I don't care much for sports simulations, but Boxing was one of the most intense video games ever, and the overhead view of the boxers was innovative, if primitive.

Dan Skelton  
Metairie, LA

*Er, Activision Boxing did finally make an issue of Digital Press... this one! Hey Dan, I know a few people who like the game as much as you do, but our crew doesn't like it at all, especially me. And I run the show around here. In fact, I've always thought that Boxing was one of the most insulting sports simulations ever created - a button puncher that relies more on fast thumbs than any of the Queens of Marksbury rules. Boxing was one of those black holes in gaming for years. Accolade's Fight Night on the 7800 was the closest I've seen on the "classic" systems.*

## EX-FANED WITH A DREAM

Dear Joe,

It certainly has been a long time since you heard from me, has it not? I apologize for not keeping in touch, even though I stopped publishing, and have no excuse except, well, it's hard to write letters for some reason. And no, this letter isn't to inform you of some new 'zine I have in the works (although I do finally have a computer), it's just to say hi and let you know what I've been up to.

Basically, my time is split up between work (I'm a lab assistant) and school (I have an advanced painting class for summer school now - four hours a day). I also used to spend a lot of time with my girlfriend, but she's vacationing in Massachusetts with her best friend now. I go out with my sister a lot; this coming weekend we're going to an all-day concert featuring the Cramps, the Blasters, Big Sandy & His Fly Rite Boys,

the Rev. Horton Heat, and a mess of others. It's all really fun rock-a-billy music.

I have really been concentrating on my painting and poetry in the absence of publishing. I've been featured at a very prestigious local poetry reading, and I've had a few free-lance articles published in a local poetry mag (you know I can't stay away from publishing in some form for very long... it's in my blood). I've really progressed quite a bit; I don't write the same clap-trap that I used to put in my old 'zines. I'll include something for you.

I just barely started to try submitting my poetry for publication. I'm optimistic and hopeful, but I know not to expect any miracles. It's hard to start out and build a name for yourself. My dream (well, A dream, anyway) is to eventually put out books of poetry (plus a novel or two, and win the lottery...).

How is Digital Press doing? I trust very well. I am so very much out of that scene. I was in a book store the other day, and someone was reading a copy of EGM (I think; it looked like EGM, anyway); I looked over his shoulder, and I just didn't recognize anything. I think everybody has finally stopped sending me fanzines and requests for fanzines and all other related stuff. I still received that stuff for a long time after I stopped publishing. It seemed almost like I got more correspondence AFTER I quit! Actually, TH\*Q still sends me press releases; I just recycle 'em.

Anyway, my life is going quite well (aside from missing my girlfriend). I don't know what the future entails (as if I would), but at least it appears bright. Hopefully, soon I'll have an art show at a local coffee house/gallery. Do you guys have a big coffee house scene? Ours is very strong; practically all of them have music or poetry or something going on.

Something cool that is coming in December is the first annual Long Beach spoken word festival. I'm planning on volunteering to help out, and I'll hopefully get to meet some of the people who are coming, like Spalding Gray, Patti Smith, Laurie Anderson, X, and so on.

Noah Dziobek  
Long Beach, CA

*I normally don't print letters this personal, but I know there are others out in DP-land (certainly in fanzine land) that have been wondering how you're doing. I'm glad to hear you're doing what you want. So few of us ever get to experience that. Your future appears bright to me too.*

*A few comments. The Cramps! I love the Cramps! I saw them live at the Ritz while they were doing their Stay Sick tour a few years ago. In my humble opinion, the greatest rock band in the world. What's so cool about them is that they don't do anything special. They*



play with the same chords Elvis did, and it's great rock and roll.

Don't take this the wrong way, Noah, but I don't think what you did before was "clap-trap" at all. I prefer straight-down-the-middle commentary over poetry anyday. Poetry confuses me. I read it, it seems to mean something, and then I find out that what I thought it meant wasn't even close. So I just don't read it. I read the poem "Release" you enclosed. It's good stuff, but I wouldn't dare try to understand what it means. Maybe if you poets also included a summarized interpretation at the end, guys like me would get into it more. You could print it upside-down and in tiny letters so real poets wouldn't accidentally read it and ruin the interpretation. Just an idea.

And no, coffee houses aren't popular here at all. At least not in Pompton Lakes. I'd say... possums. Possums are popular here.

Hey, anyway, take care of yourself. We miss you.

## THE LAD FROM EDMORE

Joe,  
Thanks for the issues! Wow, two of

'em, too! I liked Pat's (Reynolds) issue of "Alternatives" better due mostly to that excellent PsychOphile column (tons of ColecoVision reviews! YES!), but issues #22 and #25 had their moments, particularly Sean Kelly's "Drought" (it's true! You can't even FIND good Atari / ColecoVision games at garage sales these days - it's all in the pawn shops now. No biggie, though - they regard them as worthless, too, so I've been getting carts for \$1 apiece), the PVV piece (gee, sounds like life punished Redd BEFORE he even got in this business! Makes me almost sorry I bashed him in P.I., although letting those animals die was reprehensible under any circumstance), and Alan Lanoie's surprisingly intelligent letter. Yeah, Joe! Shame on you!!! I can't believe that you'd completely ignore Super Pac-Man in both the "Pac" issue AND in your response! Coincidentally, there was, as I recall, a C-64 version of SPM... you probably don't care about it since it was a disk for an 80's PC, but it exists. So does Circus Charlie (I liked that one in the arcades); Parker Bros. didn't release it though. I think those Thunder Mountain Software whoozits of PC "Dig Dug" fame did, but I'm not sure. And doesn't Alan know that copyrights bite the big one after about seven years?

Well, read the enclosed disk for more cool crap. I'm planning on sending "Next Generation" my resume since they're looking for a guy with buttloads of experience in the VG industry - you won't mind if I refer to you in it, would you? And could you review the enclosed game "The Armada" in DP?

Jess Ragan  
Edmore, MI

You're right about one thing, Jess. I completely blew it on the Super Pac-Man front. Not only had I meant to mention this game in the issue, but then I meant to mention that it exists on an Atari XE cartridge (prototype form) as well in response to Alan's letter. I'm such a doofus! Oh, and here's some more good news. Through the filthy underground of bootleg videogame carts, I've obtained a copy of Circus Charlie for the 8-bit NES. It's a VERY good translation of the arcade game - highly addictive. Jealous? Maybe you can program your own... after playing your game "The Armada", I believe there's a future for you in video game design!

Thanks also for updating the DP logo! It looks terrific!

# ONLINE? TALK TO US! DIGITPRESS@AOL.COM

BACK ISSUES: \$17 EACH  
WHAT A WONDERFUL WAY TO SAY YOU CARE!

- #1: Neo-Geo: Worth It's Weight?, Atari 7800 Checklist, Worst of Atari 2600 pt I, Genesis Golf Side-by-Side.
- #2: Whither ColecoVision?, ColecoVision Checklist pt I, Family Tree: Shooters, Worst of Atari 2600 pt II.
- #3: How to Train a Non-Gamer, Genesis Football Side-by-Side, Worst of Atari 2600 pt III, ColecoVision Checklist pt II, Streets of Rage Strategy.
- #4: Whatever Happened To...?, Vectrex Checklist, Worst of Intellivision, Videogame Mags Side-by-Side, Atari 2600 Rarities pt I.
- #5: Life of the Party Videogames, Channel F Checklist, Atari 2600 Rarities pt II, Gamepro TV Review, Scavenger Hunt '92.
- #6: Weird Games, Summer CES '92, Buyer's Guide to Classic Systems, SNES Golf Side-by-Side, Astrocade Checklist, Atari 2600 Rarities pt III.
- #7: What If...?, Worst of Genesis pt I, Atari 5200 Checklist, Atari 5200 Vs. ColecoVision Side-by-Side, Atari 2600 Rarities pt IV.
- #8: The Darker Side of Gaming, Odyssey2 Checklist, SuperCharger pt I, PsychOmedia begins.
- #9: Ups & Downs of '92, Night Trap Solution, SuperCharger pt II, Intellivision Checklist pt I.
- #10: Sequels, DP Style, Atari 2600 Rip-offs pt I, Intellivision Checklist pt II, ColecoVision A/V Inputs, New 5200 Prototypes Discovered!, Coleco Adam Feature.
- #11: DP Interviews Daniel Bass - Intellivision Programmer, Worst of ColecoVision, Atari 2600 Rip-offs pt II.
- #12: Best & Worst of SCES '93, DragonStomper Adventurer's Guide, Atari 2600 Rip-offs pt III, DP Interviews Ray Kaestner - Intellivision Programmer, Scavenger Hunt '93.
- #13: PERSPECTIVE: Videogame Trading Cards, The Puzzy/Bit Corp, Real Videogame Madness, Genesis Baseball Games Side-by-Side.
- #14: SCAVENGERS: Scavenger Hunt '93 Contest Special.
- #15: SCARY: Creepy Classic Carts, Horror Games We'll

Never See, Rare 'Ware. Compu-Mate, Fanzine X-ing with VG Experience.

#16: BRAWL: Six Intangibles of Videogames, Tournament Fighting Games Side-by-Side, The Perfect Fighting Game, Atari Jaguar First Impressions, Upgrading your Genesis, Fanzine X-ing with Zineophilia, Worst of Neo-Geo, pt I.

#17: BRATS: Jess Ragan's Land of Rare & Exotic Coin-Ops, Hollywood Looks at Videogames II, Classic Kids' Games, Jaguar Rebuttal.

#18: FOOLISH: April Fools' 1994 - purely for laughs.

#19: RUSH: Collectors: hobbyists or biddies?, Jess Ragan's Land of Rare & Exotic Coin-Ops pt 2, The GameLine System, Classic "Panic Games".

#20: ALTERNATIVES: Classic Videogame Board Games, SCES '94 Coverage, Videogame Trading Cards II, Classic Knick-Knacks, Name This Game Contest, Fanzine X-ing with The Laser.

#21: FAME: John Van Ryzin Interview, Ten Best and Worst Endorsements, Dealers vs. Bootleggers, Videogame Soundtracks, Classic "Endorsed" Games.

#22: REQUISITION: Adult Video Games, Fanzine X-ing with Infestation, Classic Favorites, Video Game Cartoons, Way of the Warrior Survival Guide, Sega Master System US Cartridge Listing, Tribute to the "Old" Atari, Guide Addendum 3.01.

#23: BRAIN: Top Ten Brain Games, ROMpage "Sega Hates Us", PsychOphile Brain Games, Guide Addendum 3.02

#24: PAC: Pac-Man Collectibles, Pac-Man Oddities, Pac-Man Reviews, Guide Addendum 3.03.

#25: SPORT: Unusual Sports in Video Games, Whatever Happened to Pleasant Valley Video Games?, ROMpage "Drought", Alternate Currents: Running Your Own Sports League, Guide Addendum 3.04.

# SILICON OF THE DAMNED

## JUST WHAT MAKES A GAME GO BAD?

BY JOE SANTULLI

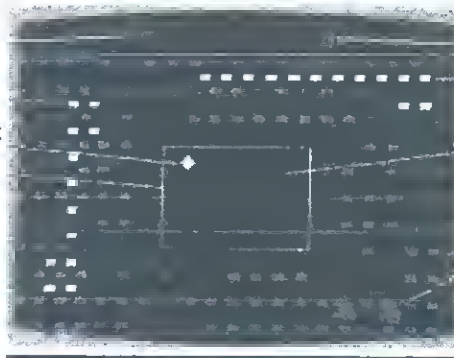
Bad games are much like bad movies to me. There's the kind I don't like because it's not my type. "Bridges Over Madison County" is not my type of movie. There's the oldies that didn't withstand the test of time. I think "Jesus Christ Superstar" is a ridiculous movie, and I'm a very christ-like individual (wild grin). Then there are those movies that other people don't like at all, but I secretly keep hidden in a very well-guarded place, free to watch when I'm all alone. Kobyashi's "Kwaidan" is one like that, a Japanese ghost movie that I'm certain would put most people to sleep.

Before you can condemn a game, it's important that you know what your tastes really are. As a videogame junkie, it took me a long time to figure out just what my kind of game was, and when I did, I began to understand why other people like games that I can't stand. For example, the *Phantasy Star* series never really appealed to me, but I know now that the battle and puzzle-solving elements that I found to be an incredible waste of time are quite enjoyable to friends of mine. I also find platform-style games like *Sonic the Hedgehog* and *Donkey Kong Country* overrated, repetitious, and unoriginal. But they sell. They sell plenty, so I guess I can't really call them "bad". Just not my cup of tea. I happen to like driving games more than most, and can tolerate a game like 3DO's *The Need For Speed* while others find it desperately sluggish.

Just because a game hasn't stood the test of time doesn't mean it is a bad game, either. Ancient home games like Activision's *Freeway*, Atari's *Bowling* and Mattel's *Ice Hockey* were all pretty good in their day. I cannot honestly say that I would spend another minute with any of them now, but I wouldn't call them bad. They just never reached the status of "classic" in my home. A classic is the kind that no matter how old it is, it's still fun. Activision's *Fishing Derby*, Atari's *Adventure*, and Mattel's *Star Strike* (Intellivision version only, please) reach classic status... three games created around the same time as *Freeway*, *Bowling*, and *Ice Hockey*, but definitely reside in a different league.

Push all of those aside and what do you have left? Trash. Games that not only weren't fun the first time we picked them

up but also lack short-term appeal. You'll see detailed descriptions of this kind of game all over this issue. Four major contributors to poor game design that I've found in my research:



**Data Age's Sssnake for Atari VCS: Block-fest.**

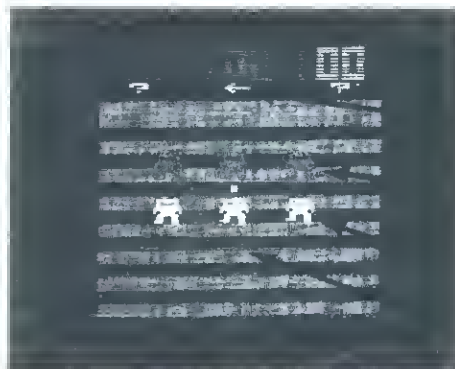
**BLOCK-fests.** It's very difficult to go back to the old games that display nothing more than dots and blocks. Today's gaming has become so realistic that you don't get the same interactive feel from games where your character is a block. This isn't always the case. I'll use Atari's *Adventure* for the 2600 as my example again. *Adventure* is still fun, even though your character is a square, and most of the other characters force you to imagine them to be what they claim to be. A bridge in this game is really just two parallel lines, but it doesn't matter because the task surrounding its use is so creative.

Bad examples would include games such as *Pac-Man* or *Sssnake* for the Atari 2600.

They're really ugly to look at, and in these games the graphics are very important. Not only is it difficult to visualize the scenario, but the hard lines and angles serve to detract from the game itself. Fortunately, block-fests are gone - they disappeared in the early 80's when Mattel's Intellivision introduced detailed sprites.

**FLICKER-fests.** Hardware limitations cause a problem in some cases where many objects occupy the same screen or

worse - the same lines of video - simultaneously. Unlike block-fests, flicker-fests will probably always exist. There are some really extreme examples of this on older games like Atari's *Football* for the 2600 where all of the players look like ghosts because they cannot all be on the screen at the same time. So one disappears, and another appears in a different place. It all happens so quickly that it just looks like the sprites are transparent. In the worst case scenario the objects disappear for too long and reappear in an entirely new location. This drives players nuts. If you've ever tried to play *Pac-Kong*, you'd see why. One moment the enemy is an inch away from you on the screen, and in a blink of an eye it's on top of you. Not good.



**Atari's Football for Atari VCS: Flicker-fest.**

Flicker-fests still exist. Every once in awhile it can be seen on a Genesis or Super NES game, and it usually manifests itself when many things are moving at the same time. At that



moment, pieces of some of the sprites mysteriously disappear and reappear. Watch *Super R-Type* on the Super NES or *Vapor Trail* on Genesis for some really interesting disappearing acts.

**SLOWDOWN.** A term made famous by early Super NES games, as bad as if not worse than flicker fests, and caused by pretty much the same conditions. Too many things going on at once and the processor gets bogged down keeping track of it all. *Super Ghouls N' Ghosts*, *Magic Sword*, and *Final Fight* are good examples of extreme slowdown. Designers got the hang of it eventually and this is not as much of a problem as it once was, but like the flicker-fest, slowdown still rears its ugly head now and then. Check out most of the *Sonic* games and you'll see what I mean when 50 rings are flying all over the place and *Sonic* chases them in slo-mo.

**BAD IDEAS.** Sometimes the root of the problem lies in the idea itself. For example, how many people own a Nintendo Power Glove and wonder why now? Nintendo had big plans for that little peripheral, and a few games were created exclusively for Power Glove owners. Kind of funny when you think about it now... well, maybe not as funny as Sega's Activator. I really don't want "partial" virtual reality, especially if it doesn't make

sense. The Activator has some pretty weird configurations, much harder to learn than the control pad is. Give me VR at home when it's complete. Things like the U-Force which allow you to strike at thin air and get a response on-screen or the Interactor that you strap on and get a mild physical reaction based on the sounds coming from the game are like hula hoops and pet rocks. They're fun for about a second, but no one will take them seriously for long.

Someone thought making "adult" 2600 games would be a good idea, too. There's big money being made in the PC/CD-ROM market on the same concept, but that's because we can see real people on the screen now and not the pixelated interpretations of yesteryear.

As you've scanned through this issue you've probably noticed that there are more crummy games on the older systems than there are today. Fact - but consider this: not only were game designers new to the consoles they were working on, they were also new to game design itself. Today's talent has yesterday's mistakes to learn from. Back then, it was all from scratch. I think that's why the older stuff can be so much more memorable to us. Because that game you just plugged in was the first of its kind you'd ever played. Good or bad.

# Psychophile

## THE 40 WORST GOLDEN AGE VIDEO GAMES EVER MADE A DP GUIDE COMPANION BY JOE SANTULLI

**1) Amidar** (Parker Bros, for Atari 2600) - This painfully slow arcade conversion seems forced. As in, "I forced myself to program this because my company thinks it will make money". Some nonsense about filling in boxes, there are apes, chickens, roller brushes, and other unlikely characters on the playfield. Video games are just so unrealistic! [Gr: 2, So: 1, Ga: 2, Ov: 1]

**2) Boxing** (Activision, for Atari 2600) - An innovative, if not ridiculous, overhead view of the action, this game could have also been titled "Two DNA Samples Flexing", and packaged as surreal video art. Not much of a game, I'm afraid. [Gr: 3, So: 5, Ga: 2, Ov: 3]

**3) Boxing** (Mattel, for Intellivision) - It says on the package that this is a boxing game, and it says it on the instructions, overlays, cartridge label... and yes, it even says it on the screen for a moment. But when I plug this game in, I see two colored amoebas flailing about. Every so often, one of the amoebas flattens out, and sometimes the other amoeba stretches real high when this happens. Is Boxing so much different on the west coast? [Gr: 1, So: 3, Ga: 3, Ov: 2]

**4) Bugs** (Data Age, for Atari 2600) - Even if you forget the concept of this game, you won't forget that you didn't enjoy playing it. You have to shoot bugs that are stretching across the screen, while every so often a UFO flies by to zap you. The game is low scoring, features nerve-wracking sound effects, and makes you wonder exactly what kind of experimental drugs it

takes to inspire someone to design something like this. [Gr: 3, So: 1, Ga: 2, Ov: 2]

**5) China Syndrome** (Spectravision, for Atari 2600) - Yes, it was even popular in the 80's to rush a game out based on a popular movie. Jane Fonda is replaced by a funky "grabber" thingie, and the three-mile-island environment is now a sort of surreal pixel storm. Besides the unenjoyable gameplay, there really is no winning - and we all know what that means. [Gr: 3, So: 1, Ga: 2, Ov: 2]

**6) Chuck Norris Superkicks** (Xonox, for Atari 2600 & ColecoVision) - The only notable this game has ever gotten was that it features the "deadliest grass in video games". True - because not only do you have to contend with other fighters in a rather mundane and repetitious manner, but if you step on the grass, time ticks away at an incredibly accelerated rate. There's a better game behind THAT idea, I'm sure. [Gr: 7, So: 3, Ga: 2, Ov: 3]

**7) Coconuts** (Telesys, for Atari 2600) - Often, rip-off games like this (stealing some of Activision's Kaboom! thunder) improve on the original.



**Data Age's *Bugs* did just that for most gamers.**

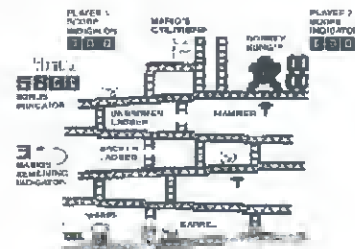
More often than not, though, they end up like this mess. If I were a jungle explorer, not only would I NOT have an umbrella, but I would walk AWAY from the monkey rather than scurry between two trees avoiding the bastard's coconuts. The frustrating situation that the monkey will ultimately win makes most of us homosapiens want to crush this cartridge beneath our heel. [Gr: 7, So: 2, Ga: 2, Ov: 3]

**8) Cosmic Corridor** (Zimag, for Atari 2600) - A big-time glut of uninspired titles graced the shelves - and soon after the clearance bins - of stores just before "the crash". One of the most commonly seen was Cosmic Corridor, which seems to have been inspired by the far superior Vanguard. Endless blasting of endless waves of enemies in an endless tunnel. There must be more to life than this. [Gr: 3, So: 5, Ga: 3, Ov: 3]

**9) Demon Attack** (Imagic, for Intellivision) - Many would not agree with me that this game belongs in a "worst of..." list, but I dare them to play the game with standard Intellivision controllers. As beautiful as the graphics are, the sluggish movement of a ship in a game that requires lightning fast reflexes just blows the whole thing to bits. Nice game to watch but I wouldn't want to play there. [Gr: 9, So: 6, Ga: 3, Ov: 3]

**10) Dice Puzzle** (Sancho, for Atari 2600) - This ugly game is a cross between Dominoes and a bad dream I once had. Sancho was never known for being innovative, and this is a weak effort. Too much black and white, not enough variety. [Gr: 2, So: 2, Ga: 3, Ov: 2]

**11) Donkey Kong** (Coleco, for Intellivision) - Yes, it seems third party developers had some problems getting the most out of the Mattel console's 16-bit technology. It really shows here. The familiar looking game looks strangely unfamiliar on Intellivision, with odd sounds, slow-motion action, and horrific controls. Coleco got better with DK Junior and Turbo later on, but this early effort just plain sucks. [Gr: 2, So: 2, Ga: 3, Ov: 3]

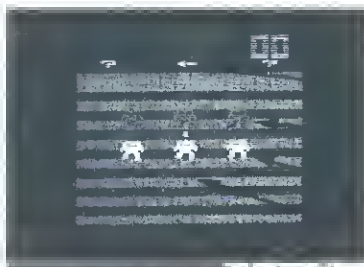


**This manual entry for Donkey Kong (Intellivision) says it all.**

**12) Drag Strip**, C009 (Fairchild, for Fairchild Channel F) - An absolutely painful idea of what a videogame is. You expect the graphics and sound to be bad for the Channel F system, but watching two capital "I"s race across the screen? This forces the question "What's worse, playing Drag Strip on the Channel F or losing a toe in an industrial accident?" If you get a thoughtful look, don't be surprised. Just add: "... and it was smashed, not just cut clean off." [Gr: 1, So: 1, Ga: 1, Ov: 1]

**13) Fire Fly** (Mythicon, for Atari 2600) - We often get Fire Fly and Sorcerer (two of the three Mythicon games for the VCS) confused around here because they're the same game with different graphics. If that concept alone isn't too silly for you, maybe the game will be: you fly a bug-machine in a world of bug-people. Except that these bug people look like snakes, pumpkins, and even Satan himself (the programmer's likeness?). Really, really dull. [Gr: 3, So: 1, Ga: 2, Ov: 2]

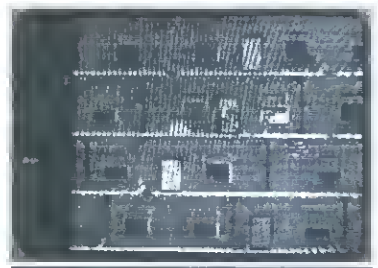
**14) Football** (Atari, for Atari 2600) - Undoubtedly one of the most dreadful games ever created. It hurts your eyes with uninterrupted flickering. It



**Atari's Football should have waited.**

hurts your hands as you try to catch the ball-carrier who seems to always be a shade faster than you. It hurts your pride that you're actually sitting here playing this while time ticks away on an otherwise important lifetime. It's hardly football as you or I know it, and it WAS a very early effort, but we feel this one should have been put off until the designers figured out how to work the code. A primate among video games. [Gr: 1, So: 1, Ga: 1, Ov: 1]

**15) Frantic Freddy** (Spectravision, for ColecoVision) - Certain "kooky" characters made their way into our homes in the 80's: the lovable blue Smurfs, the resourceful clown Mr. Do, and that wacky, fire-fighting hot-dog (no, a real frankfurter-type hot-dog) Frantic Freddy. Oh, that nutty slab of animated by-products! This was his first and last adventure, rescuing cats from a burning building. In my humble opinion, Freddy is the official mascot of the video game crash of '84. [Gr: 3, So: 3, Ga: 4, Ov: 3]



**Frantic Freddy should have never been.**

**16) Gorf** (CBS Games, for Atari 5200) - One of the most quality-populated cartridge libraries is that of the Atari 5200. It's really HARD to find a dud in the lot, but Gorf qualifies unconditionally. Whoever's idea it was to program this game with the analog feature of the joystick must have had a screw loose - the non-centering joysticks make this a nightmare to control. Tap to the right and you're ALL THE WAY at the right side of the screen. Tap back to the left to correct it, and you're ALL THE WAY at the left. You get the picture. The game designer obviously didn't. [Gr: 7, So: 6, Ga: 1, Ov: 2]

**17) Grand Slam Tennis** (Emerson, for Arcadia 2001) - You plug this game in and are immediately impressed by its graphics, which seem weeks ahead of its time. Just then, as you're serving your first ball, you realize that the opponent seems to be mired in some strange, invisible muck! He can barely move. You take advantage by lining a shot away from him. You do it again and again, easily winning the game. Then it's his turn. [Gr: 7, So: 2, Ga: 3, Ov: 3]

**18) Hangman** (Atari, for Atari 2600) - Quite possibly the most primitive looking game on the 2600, even less colorful than Breakout or Video Olympics. Acceptable for very young children, or Digital Press staffers after a night of heavy drinking. [Gr: 1, So: 1, Ga: 2, Ov: 2]

**19) Home Run** (Atari, for Atari 2600) - A sports game in the restricted tradition of Atari's other sports game, Football. Don't expect "real" baseball here. In fact, don't even expect baseball. Only a few of the rules apply, like actually pitching the ball and then hitting it. The fielding is done by a swarm of X's that represent outfielders, who move in tandem like one of those water shows. One aspect of Softball applies - hit it past the outfielders and its probably a home run. [Gr: 1, So: 1, Ga: 3, Ov: 2]

**20) Human Cannonball** (Atari, for Atari 2600) - "Human", did they say? Hmm. Here's an early demonstration of the Atari 2600's amazing ability to handle numbers. It can figure out, based on an angle and speed input, exactly how far that little "human" will travel! Amazing! Very definitely one of the worst games on this system. [Gr: 1, So: 2, Ga: 2, Ov: 2]



**Human Cannonball: definitely a bomb.**



**21) It's Only Rock 'N Roll** (Xonox, for ColecoVision) - A mess of a game done entirely in text. Defies definition, but the idea is to start up a band and make a million dollars. Warning: do NOT use this game to turn a friend on to the ColecoVision. [Gr: 1, So: 1, Ga: 2, Ov: 1]

**22) Karate** (Ultravision & Froggo, for Atari 2600) - We're taking a phone poll of people who like this game. Just call 1-800-DUMB-ASS. It's been twelve years, still no calls. Reminiscent of the Mattel Intellivision game Boxing in that the designers went with large characters and sacrificed detail and color. You're again reminded that the company Froggo didn't care much for us video gamers, as they took yet another dud (this time from Ultravision) and re-issued it. [Gr: 1, So: 4, Ga: 1, Ov: 1]

**23) Memory Match, C015** (Zircon, for Fairchild Channel F) - Here's another "concentration"-style game, where you'll have to remember where those two indistinguishable blocks appeared on the grid before. Really really really outdated. Even your grandparents will laugh at your technology level if you dare show this to them. [Gr: 1, So: 1, Ga: 2, Ov: 1]

**24) Out of this World!/Helicopter Rescue!** (Magnavox, for Odyssey2) - Most Odyssey2 games escape the "worst of..." list because there are multiple games on a cartridge. Out of this World! is a vertical-only version of Lunar Lander, and Helicopter Rescue! is a tedious exercise that must be performed as many times as you can within a set time limit. Dull to the extreme, and an extreme example of the lack of innovation in this library. [Gr: 1, So: 1, Ga: 1, Ov: 1]

**25) Pac-Kong** (Rainbow Vision, for Atari 2600) - At one time, I believed this game was the a clone of Tigervision's King Kong with altered graphics. After closer investigation, I found that this is not true. King Kong, which almost makes a "worst of..." list itself, is brilliant by comparison. In the running for the coveted "Most Flickery Game Ever Produced" award. [Gr: 2, So: 1, Ga: 2, Ov: 1]

**26) Pac-Man** (Atari, for Atari 2600) - I've never played a worse version of this game on any system, including several hardwired handhelds. This is one butt-ugly, sluggish, flicker-fest of a game. The dots are squares. The walls are longer squares. Yes, even Pac-Man and the ghosts are squares, but some of their corners are a little less square than the walls themselves. My friends, this game is squarer than the squarest thing you've ever seen. Keep away. [Gr: 3, So: 2, Ga: 4, Ov: 3]

**27) Picnic** (US Games, for Atari 2600) - A cross between Galaxian, Missile Command, and Pong. What's that you say? Seriously. Prevent kamikazee flies (Galaxian's "aliens") from destroying your sandwiches (Missile Command's "cities") by reflecting their shots (Pong). Too bad it doesn't work. The controls are especially sloppy which is surprising for a paddle game. [Gr: 4, So: 3, Ga: 2, Ov: 1]

**28) Pinball Challenge, C017** (Fairchild, for Fairchild Channel F) - The box shows pinball bumpers, the description leads you to believe it's a pinball game, but this is Breakout. Breakout, and a weak translation at that! The paddles move too slowly to catch a speedy ball and the only way to speed the paddle up is to move it diagonally in the direction you want. What's up with that? One of the less enjoyable games on a system that's not very enjoyable anyway. That should tell you something. [Gr: 1, So:



**Racquetball players as well as players of all other known games balked at the Atari 2600 version of this sport.**

1, Ga: 1, Ov: 1]

**29) Racquetball** (Apollo, for Atari 2600) - Most who have played this game and lived to tell about it still suffer from flashbacks. They can sometimes be heard screaming "It's behind me... no - it's in front of me... arrgh!", or "Is that the ball... or the shadow?... arrgh!", and the infamous "Wanna buy Racquetball from me for a dollar? No?... arrgh!". A game concept that should have never left the building. [Gr: 4, So: 3, Ga: 2, Ov: 2]

**30) Realsports Soccer** (Atari, for Atari 2600) - Supposedly an improvement over previous soccer games for this system, but we didn't think so. The players are nice and big, but for some reason the field isn't, so it's more like "Valley of the Giants meets Soccer", but that's just one of the problems. The game is just too dull, and the computer is very predictable. [Gr: 2, So: 3, Ga: 2, Ov: 2]

**31) Sea Hawk** (Froggo, Panda, & Sancho, for Atari 2600) - Here's one that drives collectors crazy because to round out their collection they have to have all three manufacturers' versions of this incredibly awful game! Intended to be a game for Defender fanatics, you can shoot down planes or drop bombs on the ship below. If you can play for five minutes you can play forever, because the difficulty never increases. Yes, folks, it's "Land of the infinite enemy planes". An interesting option allows you to guide your downed pilot onto a friendly ship. Better off in the briney deep, I say. [Gr: 2, So: 5, Ga: 2, Ov: 2]

**32) Sea Hunt** (Froggo, for Atari 2600) - Like Sea Hawk, this game was ripped off more than once (Scuba Diver by Panda and Skin Diver by Sancho), for no apparent reason other than the fact that no one was actually going to fight for the rights of it. Boasting two different screens - both are templates for bad programming - you fight off sharks, squids, big pink fish, and other indistinguishable ocean creatures to get to the sunken treasure. Greed has never been this ugly. Davey Jones' locker is too good for this game! [Gr: 1, So: 1, Ga: 1, Ov: 1]



**Froggo's Sea Hunt is my personal nightmare, the worst game I've ever played.**

**33) Sorcerer** (Mythicon, for Atari 2600) - You bought this game new for \$9.95 back when it was released and after reading the box thought you were on the good end of major heist. Then you put the game in the slot and realize that you're the one who's been robbed - of \$9.95. Sorcerer is a total triumph in customer misdirection and an abject failure in game design. It makes you wonder if the guys who wrote the description on the box (and the instructions) even talked to the folks programming it. It's a multi-screen shooter that plays way too close to Mythicon's own Fire Fly. [Gr: 3, So: 2, Ga: 2, Ov: 2]

**34) Space Fury** (Coleco, for ColecoVision) - After being greeted by a very cool looking alien head and some wicked opening music, you'd expect a shooter that rocks. Somehow, though, it's more like a waltz. The enemies are varied in appearance but not intelligence, and the graphics look very flat. A selection of weapons doesn't add as much to the game as you might expect. Much better in the arcades.

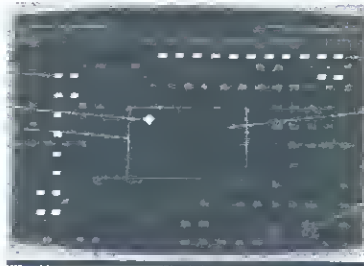


**Another Froggo classic, the forgettable Spiderdroid**

[Gr: 5, So: 4, Ga: 2, Ov: 3]

**35) Spiderdroid** (Froggo, for Atari 2600) - You can laugh at Parker Bros. 2600 adaptation of Amidar all you want, but just remember that the good folks at Froggo had Spiderdroid up their sleeves, waiting to steal some of those laughs away. It's the same game, dammit, with different graphics and sound. Not better - just different. [Gr: 2, So: 1, Ga: 2, Ov: 1]

**36) Sssnake** (Data Age, for Atari 2600) - Second in "blocky"-ness only to Pac-Man on this system. It seems to have been left in the hands of those professionals who show you a picture of an inkspot and then leave the rest to your imagination. Believe me, what you see on the screen here is strictly a matter of personal interpretation. It could be a "hunter" in the middle, shooting at "wild beasts", including a ferocious "snake". Or it could be an 8-bit representation of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Your call. Also notable for its abbreviated scorekeeping. If you manage over 99 points (very easy), you go back to zero. [Gr: 1, So: 2, Ga: 2, Ov: 1]



**Sssnake is Kevin's personal nightmare, the worst game HE's ever played.**

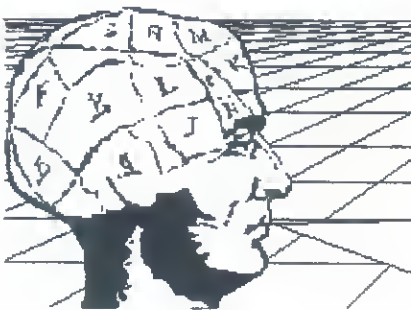
**37) Star Fox** (Mythicon, for Atari 2600) - Yes, all three of this company's

games make the "worst of" list! Star Fox is the worst of the three, a Defender-style game without the sinister enemies. In fact, the enemies here each follow the same pattern. Oh, did I mention that it's also missing the radar screen, the "smart bomb", the tiny citizens below, the background graphics, and the hyperspace option? Yep, it's almost Defender, alright. [Gr: 1, So: 2, Ga: 1, Ov: 1]

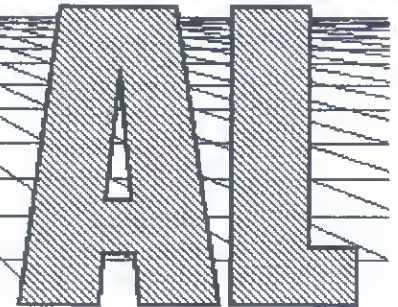
**38) Star Wars: Empire Strikes Back** (Parker Bros, for Intellivision) - The Intellivision has its share of slow games (Lock N Chase, Space Hawk), and unresponsive games (Maze-A-Tron, Night Stalker), but none quite reach the crescendo of both categories like this Star Wars game does. Uninspired, unlike the wonderfully fast-paced Atari 2600 version. [Gr: 5, So: 6, Ga: 2, Ov: 3]

**39) Stellar Track** (Sears, for Atari 2600) - Before computer games had graphics (ask your granpappy about those days), there was a really popular "Star Trek" game that tekkie nerds used to get off on, with complicated charts and "calculated" battles. Someone programming for Sears thought this was a really cool idea for the Atari 2600, and Stellar Track was born. [Gr: 1, So: 2, Ga: 3, Ov: 2]

**40) Tomarc the Barbarian** (Xonox, for Atari 2600 & ColecoVision) - I really wish I could figure this game out, but after many hours I've decided to give up. Looking quite a bit nicer on the Coleco console, the game itself is about the same: an early platform/quest game that requires pinpoint precision and patience. Missing many of the elements that make platform/quest games interesting, like colorful graphics and action, this plays more like Tomarc the Librarian. [Gr: 4, So: 2, Ga: 3, Ov: 3]



## The Wacky World of



### BAD INFLUENCES BY AL BACKIEL

The recent brouhaha over violent video games resulted in the first industry-wide rating system. The particular targets of censorship were *Mortal Kombat* & *Night Trap*. Violence and video games have been bedfellows right from the start, though. I still don't believe it results in anti-social behavior. Who knows? It may even work in reverse, as a release for aggression. Here's a "wacky" look at earlier video games that could be construed as "bad influences".

**LOCK N CHASE** (2600/INTV/GB) - An innocent *Pac-Man* clone? Hardly. You are a fugitive fleeing from the police. A good way to get shot in the back nowadays. You are also slamming doors in their faces. I see that as resisting arrest and assaulting a police officer. The instructions offer such tips as "Keep your thief on the run! Always look for an escape route, the police are right behind you."

**BANK HEIST** (2600) - Here's your chance to role play as a bank robber. You rob as many banks as you can. As the

getaway car driver, you involve the police in a high speed chase. Now you can add a charge of reckless endangerment. Wait... there's more! To stop the police you can drop sticks of dynamite for the unsuspecting law enforcement officers to run over. The packaging glorifies a couple who resemble Bonnie & Clyde. To add insult to injury, the left difficulty switch determines whether the cops are "smart" or "not so smart".

**DRACULA** (INTV) - Just what you don't want to put in the hands of kids who have a dark side which is surfacing due to all the satanic messages hidden in heavy metal lyrics. Here you play an evil, bloodsucking vampire on the search for prey. The more victims, the higher the score.

**THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE** (2600) - This time you are cast in the role of a serial killer. You are on the prowl wielding a chainsaw. Your only mindless concern is that you don't run out of gas! The same company released another violent game based on the movie *Halloween*. At least there



you're on the good side as the baby sitter trying to keep her head and prevent the deaths of young children.

**CUSTER'S REVENGE (2600)** - The objective of this controversial game is to dodge arrows so you can rape an Indian maiden who is tied to a stake. Women's groups and American Indians both were up in arms over this one. What's this? Something else is wrong here... the victim appears to be smiling.

**SKI HUNT (2600)** - Is this supposed to represent the biathlon? The Olympic event which combines cross-country skiing and target shooting is derived from an ancient hunt for food. The skier in this game couldn't possibly be shooting game just for food. He's killing more than he can eat! Such wanton destruction of wildlife... at this rate they'll all wind up as extinct or endangered species.

**A MYSTERIOUS THIEF (aka CRIMINAL PURSUIT) (2600)** - Here you are a burglar indulging in breaking and entering a house. You have to steal as many "treasures" as possible. Two vicious watch dogs will try to stop you.

**BASKETBRAWL (7800/LYNX)** - A nice healthy game of hoops for inner city youth to participate in? Hardly! Here is unsportsmanlike conduct at its worst. More like a gang war

than a game. Knives & fists flying around. The book has such sicko bits as "a knife in the gut can ruin a perfectly good lay-up".

**DUKES OF HAZZARD (COLECO/2600)** - Based on the redneck TV series which makes the police look like buffoons. Reckless driving, high speed pursuit of your vehicle. It's all there in this assault on "respect for the law".

**FIRE! (2600)** - The word that got Beavis in all of that trouble a while back was just as guilty here. You get to be a pyromaniac setting fires with kerosene. The objective being to escape the burning building before it collapses. I have yet to see a copy of this game. Opposition must have been fast and furious. The only place I ever saw it mentioned was in an article on rare vide carts by Phil Wiswell in the Feb '84 Video Review. I was wondering if it might be possible that he is confusing this cart with a similar situation that developed over a computer program called *Firebug* that was released by Muse Software. Then again, it might just be a coincidence.

There are instances of "excessive violence" found in many games. When you get killed in most games, there's usually a gruesome death scene. But hey - there are more lives and more games by just tapping reset.



**TEMPORARILY OFFLINE!**

**SEAN IS ON VACATION!**

**HE WILL RETURN IN DIGITAL PRESS #27.**



Max Uanini, president of the Italian "Old Glories Club" has been in frequent contact with Digital Press, and has questions that our readers can answer. Max has requested that we provide a "central location" for him since it is so difficult to respond to the many letters his club has received from DP readers in the past. Please take a look and let us know what you can. Send your responses to us and we'll forward the info along. Remember to include your return address!

**WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN PURCHASING INTELLIVISION FATHOM AND/OR PARKER BROS INTELLIVISION & ODYSSEY2 GAMES?**

**DO YOU HAVE C-64 WARGAMES TO SELL/TRADE? IF SO, PLEASE LIST TITLES.**

**DO YOU HAVE ANY STAR WARS FIGURINES OR OTHER MEMORABILIA TO SELL/TRADE? IF SO, PLEASE LIST.**

**WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN PURCHASING OVERSEAS ARCADIA 2001 TITLES (HANIMEX/LEISURE-VISION)?**

# Sea Hunt

Atari 2600

Froggo

Shooter



20,000  
FATHOMS BELOW  
WITH JOE  
SANTULLI

Element	Joe	Kevin	Bill	Karl	Liz	Howie
Graphics	1	2	2		2	
Sound	1	2	1		1	
Gameplay	1	2	2		1	
Overall	1	2	2		1	

Secret Area Hidden Play	Secret Area No Cheat
Significant Sprite Ending	Hidden Area
Variable Skill Game	Non-Linear Gameplay

Here comes a really strong statement. *Sea Hunt* is the worst video game I've ever played. When I look back at everything in this issue, I still can't believe *Sea Hunt* was ever made. Like the movie "Plan 9 From Outer Space", there are so many things wrong with it that it's almost funny. Everything from the blocky graphics, experimental sound effects, and horrific sprite collision detection right down to the game description in the instruction manual is just plain funny.

The object of this game is to retrieve gold from a sunken ship. A time-honored quest. On your way down, you'll encounter "man eating fish and vicious sea monsters". That's what the instruction booklet calls them. I call them "programming bugs". They just don't look right - could fish be that hard to design? Anyway, you must shoot these fish or be eaten, and you must do so within 60 seconds or your oxygen runs out. The sprite collision only works in favor of the computer here: quite often a clear hit with the harpoon registers

as a miss, while a half-body length away a fish passes by and you die. After about a dozen tries, you'll realize that the computer thinks everything is about a quarter of an inch off of where it appears on the screen. After another dozen tries, you'll actually be able to beat this screen. It wasn't the challenge that kept me playing. It was the sense of "how much worse could level two be?" that hooked me.

Eventually, you'll terminate those fish and move on to the almost-as-funny level two, where a sunken treasure ship and some indistinguishable mass of pink pixels await. The clock on your oxygen gauge is still ticking away. You can't shoot the pink mass, you must use your wits to avoid it. Fortunately, this creature seems to move randomly about, often turning away from you when you're right in its face. Unfortunately, there is some more of that wonderful sprite collision detection going on here too, as it seems you can get hung up on a wall if you brush against it the

wrong way. The few seconds it takes you to get away are usually enough for the pink mass to devour you. Don't get too aggravated about that - it turns out that those are the "sticky walls of the treasure ship" that held you. That's what the instruction booklet calls it. I call it "fucking annoying". If you manage to get the treasures and not get stuck again, you'll have to re-kill the fish that have been mysteriously brought back to life. It doesn't even explain this in the instruction booklet. I call it "typical".

The funniest thing of all is that the manufacturer of this game didn't even program the thing. They bought the rights to it and re-sold it. It's the same game as *Skin Diver* (by Sancho) and *Scuba Diver* (by Panda). Can you believe it? The worst game I've ever played was manufactured, re-packaged under a different name, then re-packaged again? The real challenge in *Sea Hunt* is to avoid physical damage to things around you while playing it.

Sea Hunt is another example of games that caused the crash of '84. Froggo games led the drive.



Oleniacz



L Santulli

Joe warned me that the games I'd have to play for this issue would not be fun. He wasn't kidding. I can't believe anyone would buy this game.

## Collector Notes

Available VERY late in the 2600's life, most Froggo games were still on discount racks in 1992! Very easy to find, but not worth owning if you just like to play.

## Power Users

Honestly, the best tip I could offer would be to pretend you never even saw this game.

## Origin

Originally seen under the Panda and Sancho labels. The game itself vaguely resembles Apollo's *Shark Attack*, although the game focuses more on shooting than on maze gobbling.



Super NES

T\*HQ

Platform



BY KEVIN  
OLENIACZ AND  
HIS BOX OF MILK  
BONES

T\*HQ gained a reputation for licensing hot Hollywood titles (i.e. *Home Alone*, *Ren & Stimpy*) and converting them into below-average games or complete duds. Under the guise of Malibu Games (a division of T\*HQ), their lack of imagination shines through once again, evident here in this lackluster translation of an unpopular cartoon license.

The premise is to survive assorted household hazards, the threats of Billy the resident bully, and the perils of the local kennel. Right off the bat, on e needs to contend with the sluggish controls. Well placed jumps play an integral part in this game. A number of times I thought I nailed the jump perfectly only to watch the pooch drop to the ground (thankfully it's impossible to fall to your death).

Once you are accustomed to the controls, what lies ahead is but a plain, boring, and incredibly unimaginative

Element	Joe	Kevin	Bill	Karl	Liz	Howie
Graphics	4	4	3		5	
Sound	4	3	3		5	
Gameplay	2	3	1		4	
Overall	2	3	2		3	

Simultaneous Multi-Play	Single Demo to Cart
Spin-off Game Library	Hidden Areas
Variable Skill Levels	Non-Linear Gameplay

platform game. Basically, all that's required is to bounce on furniture or jump on shelves or picture frames to reach items and use super barks (limited) to dispose of threatening objects. All of the mobile objects (cats, books, balls...) move in fixed patterns. The only items you can pick up are bones (to replenish health), cheese treats (super barks), peanuts (points), or a tennis ball, plate or boomerang (each used in independent bonus stages).

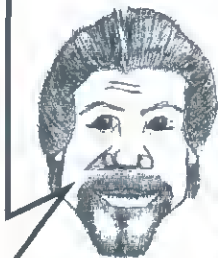
The overall game can be classified into three distinct formats. The aforementioned platform challenge comprises the majority of the time spent in the game. There are several short stages in which you'll run continually to the right while avoiding Billy's constant pursuit and jumping over ground obstacles. Third is the bonus stage, where Billy tosses a tennis ball, plate, or boomerang and you fetch it. Five times

and you get a bonus life. No great reward.

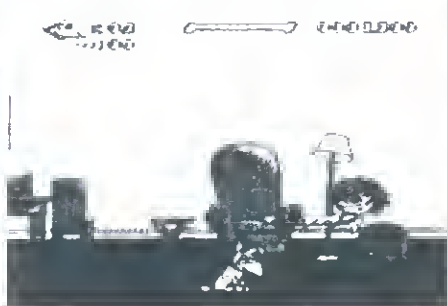
The graphics are predictably simple and cartoony. The animation is very choppy. For example, when you turn about face, there is no smooth rotation, just a quick tumabout. The backgrounds are re-used repeatedly, like a bad Hanna Barbera cartoon, and they're just plain dull. The sound effects are sparse and the music is well below SNES standards. The music in *Actraiser* (a first-generation SNES game) blows anything this game has to offer right out of the water.

Family Dog presents a "cute" facade, but the game itself is quite ordinary... tiresome in fact. In addition, the game play is very uneven. The first half is too easy, and the second half too hard. In comparison to other SNES platform games, *Family Dog* is at the bottom of the barrel.

The operative  
word in the title is  
"DOG".



J Santulli



Schultz

They just don't  
get it, do they?  
Even if Family Dog  
were a popular  
cartoon, which it  
isn't, there's more  
to a game than the  
name on the box.

## Collector Notes

This is one of those games that you'll always see while rummaging through "used games" at a local Funco Land or Electronics Boutique. There's a reason for that. The original owners didn't like the game. You won't either. Stay away.

## Power Users

Do not touch the checkpoint in the kitchen. Losing a life in the next stage (Billy's Vacuum) results in a loss of all your super barks, which are tough to come by when beginning the kitchen stage.

## Origin

Incredibly similar to another T\*HQ game, *Ren & Stimpy Veediots!*. The most basic of all basic platform games, expect nothing original.

# Beast Wrestler

Genesis

Renovation

Fighting



BY JOE "BEASTIE  
BOY" SANTULLI

Element	Joe	Kevin	Bill	Karl	Liz	Howie
Graphics	4	4	5	4	5	
Sound	2	3	4	3	4	
Gameplay	2	2	3	3	2	
Overall	2	2	3	3	2	

Character Mode	Beats Deck
Multi-Play	10 Card
Signatures	Hidden Areas
Save Ending	
Variable Skill	Non-Linear
Levels	Gameplay

At a time when fighting games were at a premium and news of *Street Fighter II* for the Super NES was causing excitement in the video game community, Genesis designers scrambled to get something on the shelves to capitalize. For some, this was a relatively successful venture. For others, it was an abject failure. *Beast Wrestler* represents Renovation's offering to the tournament fighting genre. On the surface, it shows promise: lead your beast against 15 others as you work your way to the top. Along the way, you can "merge" monsters and create a powerful hybrid. Shops allow you to add strength, see monster data, and recuperate lost health. Undemeath, when you actually see the game in action, it's a different beast.

It is difficult to tell whether the game was rushed or just poorly translated from a Japanese game. The most obvious screw-up is the bad grammar. In stark, white letters against a black background, you can be treated to some remarkable

misspellings and typographical errors. You can't even ignore them. They just pop up in plain sight. I'm sorry, but if I just plopped down sixty bucks for a game, I don't want to ever see CHAMPION OF THE WORLD HAS JUSTBEGUN" all by itself on the screen. I don't want to have rules explained to me in text with such blunders as ASPECIFIC GENEC OMBINETION staring me in the face. It's unforgiveable. It takes five seconds to fix something like that. All I can hope - we, as gamers can hope - is that the translator/playtester was dismissed after this debacle.

There are also noticeable mistakes during the transitional stages between rounds. For one thing, no matter how you win... be it by knockout, TKO, or decision, the computer always awards a "decision". I hope I wasn't supposed to get more money for a TKO than a decision or this game owes me a whole lotta cash. On several occasions the computer lied to me about what I did or didn't have. My favorite was when I

purchased a pass to the genetic combination facility, and then was told that I didn't have a pass to the genetic combination facility. Then I was suddenly transported TO the genetic combination facility. It's enough to drive you mad!

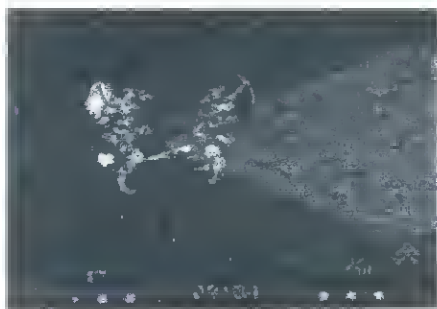
It doesn't get much better when you get right down to the game itself. All 15 fighters are very unique looking, but there aren't many moves. They basically share the same punch, kick, dash, stomp, bite moves and then there's one or two extras thrown in. It's executed in a rather unspectacular "ring" that remains unchanging throughout the tournament. Some serious problems occur in the ring when your opponent is of the four-legged variety - you can't grapple with it. Since some characters' best moves are executed while grappling, this is an unfair advantage that leaves the upright character doing nothing but kicking or whipping its tail. That gets old in a hurry. I also disliked the fact that you can

(Continued on page 15)

My favorite kind of game is the kind where you can kick your opponent's butt. This is just aggravating. The typographical errors are really funny.



L. Santulli



YOUNGMAN

You're kidding me, right? This wasn't ever sold to Joe Consumer? Looks and plays like it came free with a purchase of a toaster.

## Collector Notes

NOT MANY people bought this game when it was released, but those who did have probably traded it in by now. A really terrible early Genesis title that isn't worth any amount of money.

## Power Users

YOU CAN HIT AN ENEMY while it's down, you just have to find the right spot to stand. Also, use the turbo feature on the "B" button. It will increase your chances of winning the move when the beasts lock.

## Origin

Plays like early wrestling titles, especially the C-64 diskette game *Body Slam*. Controls are very similar to most wrestling games as well, requiring fast button pressed while locked to "win the move".



# Random reviews

# LITE

...WHERE WE PRESENT REVIEWS WITH THE SAME GREAT TASTE AND  
ONLY HALF THE CALORIES!

## BEAST WRESTLER RENOVATION, FOR GENESIS

(Continued from page 14)

be hit while you're down, and the amount of time you're down is random - no amount of pad wiggling, button bashing, or special combinations will get you up quicker. It does nothing but tick seconds off of the clock and tick off the players completely.

Some of these flaws could almost be tolerated if the game was fun to play. It isn't, though, because it doesn't rely on the combinations and special moves that make fighting games intriguing. The pace is slow, too. It's odd that the "name selection" screen is so lightning fast that it's hard to get the cursor to stop on the letters you want, yet the game seems to delay when you press a button to strike.

*Beast Wrestler* is an unacceptable entry in the Genesis library. I remember talking to a representative at Renovation shortly after I got this game and I asked him if they would recall the product, citing these many glitches. At that time the attitude was "it's selling off the shelves". I wonder where that rep is today? Hmm.

## ANNET AGAIN WOLF TEAM, FOR MEGA CD

# 3

Oh no! Not *Again!*? *Annet*, who originally appeared in the forgettable Genesis shooter *El Viento*, stars in a lame side-scrolling fighting contest. This *Streets of Rage/Final Fight* wannabe never made it to the states. If it did you would most likely find it in the bargain bins alongside *El Viento* and *Earnest Evans*, other Wolf Team misses (many Wolf Team products were brought to the U.S. by

Renovation).

A few of the backgrounds are pretty but the character animation is very jerky and unnatural. The audio effects and music are palatable, as are the cinematic sequences, but the actual gameplay is downright pathetic. The action slows down to a crawl when an opponent gets tossed offscreen. It isn't unusual in these situations to wait 20 seconds for that character to make its way back onto the screen. The majority of the levels are a breeze to complete... until you meet up with the boss, who's a pain to beat. One hit from the boss depletes nearly half of your total strength, while you'll need to successfully attack a number of times to achieve this result. A cinematic cameo by Earnest Evans doesn't increase the game's appeal. *Annet Again* is a nearly invisible worst-than-mediocre entry by Wolf Team. A game that may obtain a fine collectibility factor if you're willing to wait until the 21st century

to part with it. - Kevin Oleniacz

## CHECKERED FLAG ATARI, FOR JAGUAR

# 2

It took more than a year to arrive, and when it did it immediately became one of the least playable games I've ever... "played". The Atari team (actually Rebellion) tried to copy the success of Sega's *Virtua Racing* and came up with their own polygon racer, *Checkered Flag*. They thought they would "one-up" VR by adding many more tracks and views. The tracks all look about the same

(except for the color) and the extra views add nothing. The graphics are very sparse. The number of polygons on screen look to be less than VR on the Genesis and certainly less than the 32X *VR Deluxe*. The music is nothing to crow about, but where the game really fails is in gameplay. Try as I might, I could not find any fun in the game. I tried different views, different tracks, changed the spoilers and tires, but there wasn't a single combination that made a difference. The controls are so bad you'll feel like chucking your controller as far as it will go (that short wire allows 18 inches at least). A complete disaster. Do not buy this, and send a message back to the manufacturer that crappy games do not sell. 64 bit, I think not! - Edward Villalpando

## CRUISE MISSILE FROGGO, FOR ATARI 2600

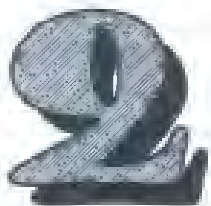
# 1

The Atari 2600 library is flooded with shooters. In order to succeed in this type of market, you need to create something with very attractive graphics, additive gameplay, and maybe something a little extra to set it apart from the rest. *Cruise Missile* has none of these things. Originally titled *Exocet* (by Sancho, a distributor/manufacturer out of Great Britain), the game bombed on the

European market and was systematically sold at a significant discount in the U.S. *Cruise Missile* is just a simple horizontally scrolling shooter with but a handful of multi-colored blobs supposedly representing enemy ships and installations. Most who have played this game will remember it for its restricted movement, allowing very little room for error. The sounds, screeching out of a television speaker, are as crude as they can be. The game is hard, tedious, and an instant candidate for "doorstop", "paper weight", or anything else you can use the

plastic casing for that doesn't include actually putting it into the 2600. After thirty seconds of this disaster you've seen all there is to see. A low-level pile of trash that helped contribute to the end of the classic era. - Kevin Oleniacz

## FRANTIC FREDDY SPECTRAVISION, FOR COLECOVISION



Well, you've probably seen this title a few times throughout this issue and I'm glad because it's a personal dislike of mine. *Frantic Freddy* represents what video gaming should not be: silly mascots, linear repetitious play, over-hyped packaging, and just plain weak programming. Freddy is a hot dog that fights fires. I have a problem with that. Immediately I'm thinking that some foreign person had a great idea and it was translated improperly to the English "a hot dog that fights fires". Oddly, this hot dog appears to be a bug on the screen. Not just by interpretation, either. No, it has stiff black appendages that help it move, and giant eyes protruding from stalks in its head. And no fireman's hat. Who ever heard of a fire fighter without a hat? God damn, video games are so unrealistic! To add to the frustration, this hot dog has a theme song. It's cute the first time you hear it, but it's long and it plays at the beginning of each level. You can't shut it off. When you finally get to the game, you'll find that this hot dog only rescues cats (sounds like another bad translation, doesn't it?), and does so by shooting bursts of water at the flames coming out of a building window. Little bits of fire also drop down - I guess that's the "action" part of the game - and once you clear the flames, you get to hear that theme song again and fight the flames while they chase you around a bit. The problem with the second round is that the pattern never changes, and the flames are totally predictable. Beat them, then its back to the theme song, the first round, and probable brain damage. At least if you paid a buck for the game at a garage sale, you've got a great collector's item. If you purchased the game for \$29.99 twelve years ago like I did, you'll never eat another hot dog again. - Joe Santulli

## SHADOW: WAR OF SUCCESSION TRIBECA, FOR 3DO



There are some games that just deserve to be reviewed twice. I reviewed this one when I first played it back in issue #22 when it would have cost you \$59.99. If you ever listened to me, I hope that was the time. I've noticed that this game has been reduced to the incredibly low price of \$19.99. This is NOT a bargain. At \$4.99 I still wouldn't consider it. If you gave it to me along with *Mad Dog McCree* and *Stellar 7*, I might think about it. Those CD's make pretty good coasters. I'd almost have enough to make a full set when friends come over. *Shadow* is one of those games that really looks pretty good on the box. It's dark, moody, and contains some real good violence (at least according to the box which seems to boast about its Mature rating), and now at \$19.99 what could you possibly lose on this 32-bit "next generation" game? I'll tell you what you lose. You lose exactly \$19.99 plus tax. It's

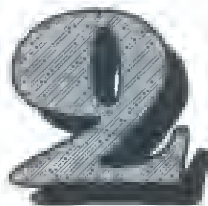
completely gone, because a few minutes with this game will make you feel like you're now wasting *time* as well as money and that will be the end of it. The graphics are so badly animated that actual contact between two characters isn't necessary to score a hit. "Fireball"-type moves can actually be outrun - I dare say *outwalked* - by the initiator of the move. The voice samples will make you want to personally meet the characters so you can perform a fatality on their vocal chords. Not that you can perform fatalities in the game - sorry, just because everyone else is doing that doesn't mean Tribeca will follow suit. You also won't get many of the other features you may have considered standard options by now, like combos, hidden characters, and other secrets. The only secret about *Shadow* is that you might have one hidden in a drawer somewhere. That's OK. Your secret is safe with me. Just promise to warn anyone you meet with a 3DO to steer clear of this one and I promise not to tell. - Joe Santulli

## SLURPY XONOX, FOR COLECOVISION



It appears as if every home console has its own personal manufacturer of "trash". The Atari 2600 had Mythicon. Nintendo had FCI. Even the 3DO has one - Tribeca - although it appears they won't be too busy with video games anymore. ColecoVision's bane was Xonox, a company that did a fair job with Atari 2600 games but couldn't deliver the goods on the "high end" carts. *Slurpy* is, at its heart, a shooter. It feels more like a game of dodge ball, but it's a shooter. Your character looks something like an elephant's head without the ears. It's trunk sucks up anything nearby. Floating all around you, in a walled-in cave, are various nasties - Glowbugs are harmless balls that ricochet from the walls; Cavebugs hug the ground and then dash up from below; Widowmaker spiders creep from above and attempt to poison you; and there are several more. The game play itself isn't too bad (although it is unforgivingly repetitious), it's the presentation that's mainly at fault. Each of the mono-colored sprites is barely animated at all. All of the cave levels look identical. There is no background music, just the incessant "slurp" sound of the title character. Even if you're good enough to get through a few levels, you'll still want to shut it off. If the game had a little more depth you might have wanted to stick it out, but as it stands, you'll just want to stick it at the back of your collection. - Joe Santulli

## STAR FOX MYTHICON, FOR ATARI 2600



Who did Mythicon think they were fooling when they claimed this to be the first in a series of...? The premise is quite simple. Mine crystals from the ocean floor, and destroy or evade a single attacker while doing it. There is never more than one enemy at a time, making for a rather barren playfield. You've seen everything *Star Fox* has to offer fifteen seconds into the game. The sounds are sparse, ditto for the graphics. Unlike its namesake on the Super NES, *this Star Fox* has no redeeming features. - Kevin Oleniacz

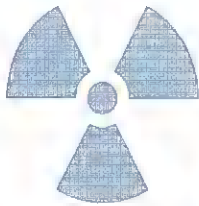


## TAG TEAM WRESTLING DATA EAST, FOR NES



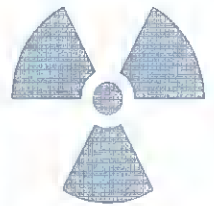
There are few duds in the Nintendo line-up. Recall that Nintendo had strict policies on their game releases that not only limited manufacturers to the number of titles they could produce, but also governed the quality of these titles. This makes me wonder how *Tag Team Wrestling* snuck by. A translation of a pretty cool arcade game, it seems like

the animation was removed completely for the home version. Wrestlers share the same bodies (different heads) and animations (which are jerky beyond acceptable levels). You can punch. That's your control over the game. If you "lock up" with the other wrestler, you use the other button to cycle through the moves. Every wrestler has the same set of moves. The sounds aren't really there either, just that typical "spatch" sound when any contact is made. This game will have you checking to see if that Nintendo seal of quality is fraudulent because it's hard to believe this game got through. - Joe Santulli



## DP STAFF:

## OUR "BOTTOM 10"s



*Researching this issue truly dug up the worst in our collections. There are bad games and then there are the "bottom 10", those games we consider the worst we've ever played, but - unfortunately - also own. Here's our rundown of the worst purchasing mistakes we've ever made.*

### AL BACKIEL:

1) KARATE (2600) - Graphics consist of two stick figures who look like they're dancing the mambo instead of fighting. Requires logic instead of lightning reflexes.

2) E.T. (2600) - Not a bad concept actually. May even be considered role-playing. What ruins it is those damn holes that you keep falling into. It gets to be a pain in the arse falling in and climbing out.

3) FOOTBALL (2600) - Atari's sloppy attempt to get out a football game quickly and it shows. 4 man teams, excessive flickering, limited plays. The players are so blocky they look like robots.

4) RACQUETBALL (2600) - The game seems to be uncontrollable and totally unplayable. This was an early Apollo release.

5) PAC-MAN (2600) - Another Atari rush job. KC Munchkin had already beaten them to the punch. What resulted was a game that was far different from the arcade version. Had a hard time cornering. Had ghosts that suffered from severe flickering. Atari later redeemed themselves with Ms. Pac-Man.

6) BUGS (2600) - A totally unfair, point-the-gunsight-and-fire contest. Most games are over quickly. There is an obnoxious sprite that keeps getting in your way and is hard to avoid.

7) COCONUTS (2600) - What a shit game! You are always on the defensive dodging coconuts. You can't fight back. The game speeds up rapidly. You can't predict where the next nut will fall. Even when you see it coming, you can't get out of the way.

8) SLOT RACERS (2600) - Grade school graphics. Looks like two chairs chasing each other. Racers bend when going around corners. Nice effect - not.

9) SSSNAKE (2600) - Another stinker from Data Age. The game is all over when you learn how to avoid the snake (which is easy because it's so predictable). When you score 99 points you may as well quit, since that's as high as the game can register.

10) M.A.D. (2600) - That's just what this game will make you. Actually, it means Missile Attack & Defense). What you get is an excruciatingly slow cannon that must be swung around to hit the attackers. It has a high frustration level and therefore little replay value.

### JEFF COOPER:

1) SPACE FURY (ColecoVision) - Plug in this Asteroids clone. Watch the cool opening alien and check out the fantastic introductory space music. Then quick, switch carts!

2) URBAN CHAMPION (NES) - Fighting games that require memorization of 700 moves don't cut it. This gem of a Streetfighter II clone requires you to memorize two moves: one button punches, the other kicks. Need I say more?

3) 10-YARD FIGHT (NES) - Instantly re-named 10 Yard Shite, this simplistic piece of garbage is the Urban Champion of football. It was so bad that I wrote to a magazine to complain about a positive review, arguing that even 5200 football was better. They re-reviewed it and lowered the rating.

4) TROJAN (NES) - Scroll along killing enemies until your life meter runs out. Original, huh? My boredom meter ran out in ten minutes and the cart went back for a refund. Given the risqué title, I was expecting something more like Bachelor Party.

5) WAYNE'S WORLD (SNES) - Great opening. Gameplay: not!

6 & 7) ELITE SOCCER (SNES) - and another Soccer game for SNES whose name escapes me (World Soccer '94? I'm in the middle of packing)- incredibly, one soccer game was released and sold for the SNES under two titles. They both stink (obviously). You can program player names, but you can't save them. Brilliant.

8) NBA ALL-STAR CHALLENGE (SNES) - Everyone is bitching that FMV games have no gameplay. They should try this one.

9 & 10) E.T. and RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK (2600) - We need to determine the morons behind these dogs. Then we need to sponsor a commando raid to capture them. Then we need to hold a Nuremburg-like trial and hang them. These dopes put Atari out of business, and our hobby would be even better today if the company hadn't been sold to the Tramiels.

### KEVIN OLENIACZ:

1) SSSNAKE (2600) - This offers squares and rectangles for graphics, sparse but harsh sounds, a score counter which rolls over at 100 points, and absolutely no features which can even be considered as mediocre.

2) SEA HAWK (2600) - One enemy appears on

the screen at once. Where's the challenge? Shoot that lone enemy is your only objective. The graphics don't help out either, as the majority of the screen is barren.

### 3) IT'S ONLY ROCK 'N ROLL

(COLECOVISION) - A text game for a programmable cartridge based system. Unlike the PC Zork trilogy, this doesn't even offer an involving story line. To top it off, the game comes to a halt whenever a decision needs to be made.

4) BACK TO THE FUTURE (GENESIS) - Many poor 16-bit games hide behind cute or well structured graphics. BTTF has neither. A very hard and lackluster action game with bad controls can be the worst game in 16-bit library.

5) CRUISE MISSILE (2600) - Also known as Exocet, this space shootem-up really sucks. With a library is chock full o' shooters, a new entry needs to have some redeeming features. Cruise Missile has none. It's an ultra tough side scroller with blobs for graphics. The same enemies appear over and over.

6) STARGUNNER (2600) - When a friend survives in the middle of the playfield for over a minute without defending himself, you know it's a bad game. This is another with poor graphics, a lack of intelligence on the enemies (and programmers) part, and minimal threats which do not increase as play continues.

7) PAC-KONG (2600) - Flapping squares which somehow appear where your character is standing just adds frustration (and a smashed joystick) to a lackluster platform game. The graphics are bare and your challenge is to conquer the same screen over and over again.

8) BASIC PROGRAMMING (2600) - On the surface this appears to have many features. In reality it's a sick joke in comparison to early PC's. All of the options are extremely limited. The graphics department only displays a square manipulated around the screen.

9) OUT OF THIS WORLD (ODYSSEY 2) - This lunar lander simulation has absolutely no replay value. Just start up your engine, try to accomplish a smooth landing, and go back to square one. The lack of detail doesn't help the blobby sprites which you control.

10) TRAYSIA (GENESIS) - A decent RPG must contain an involving storyline. Traysia lacks this,

and a decent combat system. You need to travel to one location, hold an abbreviated conversation, walk clear across the kingdom, and back again. To top it off, you walk at a snail's pace, and the screen jerks after several steps.

## JOE SANTULLI:

1) IT'S ONLY ROCK N ROLL (ColecoVision) - I kept waiting for the graphics to come. I waited and waited, and suddenly the game was over. I've been scammed!

2) SEA HUNT (2600) - I was hunting for aspirin after a few seconds with this game. If the colors don't hurt your eyes and the sound doesn't hurt your ears you're just blind and deaf. Sorry I had to be the one to tell you.

3) BEAST WRESTLER (Genesis) - I can forgive early 8-bit efforts because they had so little to work with. The same can't be said for Genesis games like this piece of crap that was obviously hurried out to the stores for a quick buck. I hope everyone brought theirs back.

4) JOE MONTANA CD (Sega CD) - Sega CD owners waited nearly a year for this game to be released, and what a joke it was. Those blocky players are reminiscent of the Nintendo 8-bit football game 10-Yard Plight.

5) JAMES BOND 007 (ColecoVision, 2600) - Few will agree with me on this one, but I rate "bad" games usually as those too frustrating to play. This one is at the top of that particular list, unfairly blowing you away as unseen objects suddenly destroy your car/boat.

6) JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING FOR CHANNEL F (Channel F) - It's so hard to decide: Desert Fox, which doesn't touch 2600 Combat with a ten foot barrel; Pinball Challenge, which is strangely lacking any pinball games; Drag Strip where the letter "I" races three inches across the screen? Almost all of these games are inept.

7) BACK TO THE FUTURE 3 (Genesis) - Three games in one, each one worse than the last, and the whole cartridge worse than the two before it. Some of these movie-to-videogame translations are for the birds.

8) STAR WARS: THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK (Intellivision) - Loved the 2600 version. This is one of the few dogs in the Intellivision line-up.

Makes you wonder what Luke Skywalker was drinking before getting in that ship.

9) TAG TEAM WRESTLING (NES) - a piss-poor arcade translation from Data East. One of those memorably bad "what the hell is this" cartridges that eventually ended up in a million pieces.

10) KARATEKA (7800) - It worked so well on my Commodore 64, you have to wonder what happened on the way to the Atari console. Few will ever see the ending because the controls - which are bad enough - are hampered by poor response.

## EDWARD VILLALPANDO:

1) KARATEKA (7800) - A dull looking/playing game with awful controls, one of the worst for this system.

2) ILLUSIONS (ColecoVision) - A very confusing game. I read the manual and I still don't get the point.

3) IT'S ONLY ROCK N ROLL (ColecoVision) - This has got to be the worst ColecoVision game. Mostly text and no fun at all.

4) AMAZING BUMPMAN (ColecoVision) - I didn't know what to expect when I bought this game blindly. Trust me, you're not missing anything!

5) STREET SMART (Genesis) - Dull graphics, limited moves, and easy to defeat. You can even bet against yourself.

6) MAT MANIA CHALLENGE (7800) - A very disappointing wrestling game. Bland graphics, hard-to-execute moves, and minimal sound.

7) ONE ON ONE (7800) - What happened to this one? Very sluggish game play and questionable button arrangement.

8) CHECKERED FLAG (Jaguar) - After a year's wait, I'm treated to this? The least playable Jaguar game to date.

9) DAM BUSTERS (ColecoVision) - You can hardly tell if you're flying or on the ground. A nearly impossible game to complete.

10) URBAN CHAMPION (NES) - A pointless punching game. Where were the QC guys when this passed by?

## TOBERMANN'S TOP TEN REJECTED ATARI AD SLOGANS

10. "Let the Games Begin, Already!"
9. "Get Burned by Jaguar"
8. "The Atari Jaguar. Just Say NO"
7. "Riddle Me This, Riddle Me That, Who's Afraid of the Big Black Cat?"
6. "We May Not Be #1, But We Try Harder"
5. "I'm Not Going to Pay a Lot For That Jaguar!"
4. "Doing the Math is Half the Fun"
3. "Have You Dusted Your Jaguar Today?"
2. "The Atari Jaguar... What's Up With That?"
1. "Come Kick the Cat"



# DP GUIDE ADDENDUM 3.05

## COLLECTOR'S GUIDE UPDATES BY JOE SANTULLI

*Here's where I get to prove once again that I'm NOT a good businessman by updating your guide (third edition) with new entries and changes. Sometime in the not-too-distant future we'll have a fourth edition, complete with PsychOphile entries (actual game evaluations), new essays, and price updates.*

*Until that time, add these pages to your current Guide. And live by it!*

### The **RCA STUDIO II**

by Al Backiel

RCA came out with their programmable cartridge based system in early 1977. It had a very short lifespan primarily because the screens were only in black & white, even on a color TV. There are no joysticks. Control is by dials and buttons. There is no fire button per se. It's easy to see why it became obsolete so quickly. The Atari 2600 was introduced later that same year and was technologically superior. It overcame all of the disadvantages Studio II owners would be faced with. Atari also managed to win the support of Sears and nail down the license to the hottest video game of the era, *Space Invaders*.

As for physical appearances, the Studio II is sharply designed. The console is beige and tan with gold and silver trim. Each console side (L & R) represents a player and has calculator-style buttons. These 0-9 buttons can represent digits or directionals depending on the game. Each player also has a dial controller which acts as a paddle. The standard computer/TV switch cannot be used, however - this system has a special jack on the end of an 18 foot cord that plugs into its own switch box. The AC power adapter must also plug into the same box. This makes it inconvenient to swap systems easily. The cartridge slot is in the center, as is a "clear" key and power light. There are no difficulty switches. A channel 2/3 switch is hidden underneath.

One gets the impression that the Studio II was built primarily for educational purposes judging by the software offered. The system was packaged with five built-in "games": *Doodle/Patterns/Bowling/Freeway/Addition*. The carts themselves are rectangular in shape and beige in color. Each cart has loading and playing instructions printed on the label. The games all suffer from the primitive graphics of the time. None of the games are recommended. *Space War* and *Bowling* are mildly amusing at best.

#### CARTRIDGES

- ☐ Baseball.....RCA.....  
*TV Arcade IV. #18V403.*
- ☐ Biorhythm.....RCA.....  
*TV Mystic Series. #18V700.*
- ☐ Blackjack.....RCA.....  
*TV Casino I. #18V600.*
- ☐ Fun With Numbers.....RCA.....  
*TV Arcade II. #18V401.*
- ☐ Gunfighter/Moonship Battle.....RCA.....???
- TV Arcade Series. #18V405.*
- ☐ Space War.....RCA.....

*TV Arcade I. #18V400.*

- ☐ Speedway/Tag.....RCA.....  
*TV Arcade Series. #18V404.*
- ☐ Tennis/Squash.....RCA.....  
*TV Arcade III. #18V402.*
- ☐ TV Schoolhouse I.....RCA.....  
*Packaged with two manuals. #18V500.*
- ☐ TV Schoolhouse II: Math Fun.....RCA.....  
*#18V501.*

#### NON-CARTRIDGE ITEMS

- ☐ RCA Studio II Console.....RCA.....  
*#18V100.*

#### ARCADIA 2001 UPDATES/

- ☐ 3D Bowling.....Leisure Vision .....20.00  
*Short cartridge. Cart #13, part #MC1006.*

- ☐ Alien Invaders .....Hanimex ..... 30.00  
Short cartridge. Cart #8, part #MC1000.
- ☐ Alien Invaders .....Leisure Vision ..... 20.00  
Short cartridge. Cart #8, part #MC1000.
- ☐ Baseball .....Leisure Vision ..... 20.00  
Short cartridge. Cart #15, part #MC1001.
- ☐ Brain Quiz .....Leisure Vision ..... 20.00  
Short cartridge. Cart #20, part #MC1011.
- ☐ Breakaway .....Hanimex ..... 20.00  
Short cartridge. Cart #17, part #MC1007.
- ☐ Capture .....Leisure Vision ..... 20.00  
Short cartridge. Cart #19, part #MC1010.
- ☐ Crazy Gobbler .....Hanimex ..... 30.00  
Short cartridge. Cart #1, part #MC1020.
- ☐ Hobo .....Leisure Vision ..... 20.00  
Long cartridge. Cart #37, part #MC1042.
- ☐ Jungler .....Leisure Vision ..... 20.00  
Long cartridge. Cart #23, part #MC1021.
- ☐ Missile War .....Leisure Vision ..... 20.00  
Short cartridge. Cart #10, part #MC1009.
- ☐ Ocean Battle .....Leisure Vision ..... 20.00  
Short cartridge. Cart #11, part #MC1008.
- ☐ Red Clash .....Leisure Vision ..... 20.00  
Long cartridge. Cart #12, part #MC1024.
- ☐ Robot Killer .....Hanimex ..... 30.00  
Long cartridge. Cart #3, part #MC1017.
- ☐ Robot Killer .....Leisure Vision ..... 30.00  
Long cartridge. Cart #3, part #MC1017. REPLACES  
DPG3 ENTRY.
- ☐ Route 16 .....Leisure Vision ..... 20.00  
Long cartridge. Cart #35, part #MC1038.
- ☐ Soccer .....Leisure Vision ..... 20.00  
Short cartridge. Cart #16, part #MC1002.
- ☐ Space Attack .....Leisure Vision ..... 20.00  
Long cartridge. Cart #2, part #MC1016.
- ☐ Space Mission .....Leisure Vision ..... 20.00  
Short cartridge. Cart #9, part #MC1005.
- ☐ Space Squadron .....Hanimex ..... 30.00  
Long cartridge. Cart #5, part #MC1014.
- ☐ Space Squadron .....Leisure Vision ..... 20.00  
Long cartridge. Cart #5, part #MC1014.
- ☐ Space Vultures .....Leisure Vision ..... 20.00  
Long cartridge. Cart #7, part #MC1013.
- ☐ Spiders .....Leisure Vision ..... 20.00  
Long cartridge. Cart #29, part #MC1032.
- ☐ Star Chess .....Leisure Vision ..... 20.00  
Short cartridge. Cart #18, part #MC1004.
- ☐ Turtles/Turpin .....Leisure Vision ..... 20.00  
Long cartridge. Cart #34, part #MC1034. REPLACES  
DPG3 ENTRY.

## ATARI 2600

- ☐ Bionic Breakthrough .....Atari ..... \*\*\*  
This game was intended for use with The "MindLink

System", which was never released. As it stands, the game is rendered unplayable with conventional controllers. 1984. REPLACES DPG3.04 ENTRY "MINDLINK/BIONIC BREAKTHROUGH".

- ☐ Gigolo {E} .....Mystique ..... 80.00  
Includes the leather/plastique case with brass key common to Playaround titles.
- ☐ Jungle Fever {E} .....Mystique ..... 80.00  
Includes the leather/plastique case with brass key common to Playaround titles.
- ☐ Mr. Gobbler (Pac-Man) {E} .....Taiwan D ..... 25.00
- ☐ Pac-Man (Mr. Gobbler) .....Atari ..... 1.00  
A peck-in with the Atari 2600 console beginning in 1983. Atari 2600 version designed (rather poorly) by Todd Fry, for a reported \$1 million in royalties. #CX2646. REPLACES DPG3 ENTRY.
- ☐ Pac-Man (Mr. Gobbler) .....Sears ..... 10.00  
#4978185. REPLACES DPG3 ENTRY.

## ATARI 5200

- ☐ Millipede .....Atari ..... 75.00  
This prototype seems complete, but wasn't released. This price is for the actual prototype, not a copy. #CX5248. REPLACES DPG3 ENTRY.

## VECTREX DESIGNERS DISCOVERED

- ☐ 3D Crazy Coaster {I!, No O} .....GCE ..... 60.00  
Designed by Bill Hawkins. #3634. REPLACES DPG3 ENTRY.
- ☐ 3D Mine Storm [w/3D Imager] {I!, No O}.GCE ..... 50.00  
Packed with the 3-D imager, you cannot play the 3-D games without the imager, even in "2D". Designed by Bill Hawkins. #3635. REPLACES DPG3 ENTRY.
- ☐ Armor..Attack .....GCE ..... 15.00  
Designed byDuncan Muirhead. #3301. REPLACES DPG3 ENTRY.
- ☐ Bedlam .....GCE ..... 25.00  
Designed by Bill Hawkins. #3305. REPLACES DPG3 ENTRY.
- ☐ Berzerk .....GCE ..... 15.00  
Designed by Chris King. #3302. REPLACES DPG3 ENTRY.
- ☐ Cosmic Chasm .....GCE ..... 15.00  
Designed by Bill Hawkins. #3101. REPLACES DPG3 ENTRY.
- ☐ Hyperchase .....GCE ..... 15.00  
Designed by Chris King. #3201. REPLACES DPG3 ENTRY.
- ☐ Melody Master {L!, No O} .....GCE ..... 40.00  
Designed by Ronald J. Logsdon. #3602 REPLACES DPG3 ENTRY..
- ☐ Mine Storm {X} .....GCE ..... N/A  
Not a collectible cartridge, as it was built into the Vectrex.



*Designed by John Hall. REPLACES DPG3 ENTRY.*

- ☐ Polar Rescue .....GCE .....50.00  
*Designed by Mark Indictor. # 3308. REPLACES DPG3 ENTRY.*
- ☐ Rip Off .....GCE .....15.00  
*Designed by Bill Hawkins. # 3102. REPLACES DPG3 ENTRY.*
- ☐ Scramble .....GCE .....10.00  
*Designed by Paul Allen Newell. # 3103 REPLACES DPG3 ENTRY..*
- ☐ Spinball .....GCE .....25.00  
*Recieved an honorable mention for "Video Game of the Year (16K or more ROM) 1983" by Electronic Games Magazine. Another title called "Flip Out Pinball" is actually a prototype version of this game. Designed by Mark Indictor. # 3204. REPLACES DPG3 ENTRY.*
- ☐ Star Castle .....GCE .....50.00  
*Named by Electronic Fun Magazine as one of the "50 Best Games" in March 1984. Designed by Bill Hawkins. # 3109 REPLACES DPG3 ENTRY..*
- ☐ Star Trek: The Motion Picture .....GCE .....10.00  
*Designed by Mark Indictor. # 3107. REPLACES DPG3 ENTRY.*
- ☐ Web Wars.....GCE .....40.00  
*Designed by Bill Hawkins, Patrick King, and Duncan Muirhead. # 3108. REPLACES DPG3 ENTRY.*

## RUAOR ALL ATARI 2600

- ☐ Elevator Action.....Atari .....n/a  
*A catalog entry reads: "As Agent 17, it is your mission to steal government documents from e heevily-guarded top-secret defense building. By making your way down elevators and escalators, you must pick up files and escape to the getaway car in the garage. But watch out for enemy agents!" #CX26126. REPLACES DPG3 ENTRY.*
- ☐ Garfield .....Atari .....n/a  
*A catalog entry reads: "Join Garfield the Cat in his madcap video adventure, as he frantically tries to catch up with Nermal, his cute friend. Hopping fences, chasing Odie, and generally stirring up the neighborhood are Garfield's specialties". #CX26132.*
- ☐ Good Luck, Charlie Brown .....Atari .....n/a  
*A catalog entry reads: "Helping CHARLIE BROWN fly his kite is just like the real thing. The wind will tighten and slacken the kite string, birds will get in the way, lightning may strike - and worst of all, there's the kite-eating tree. If you run afoul of too many of nature's hazards, you can*

*earn another crack at the kite by raking leaves". #CX26112. REPLACES DPG3 ENTRY.*

- ☐ Last Starfighter, The.....Atari .....n/a  
*Made it es far as a prototype for the 5200. A catalog entry reads: "Your lone spaceship is all that stands between the planet Rylos and the evil forces of the Ko-Dan armada. Based on the new Universal/Lorimar release, The Last Starfighter features dramatic first-person battle action, plus graphics that bring the movie home". #CX26134. REPLACES DPG3 ENTRY.*

## ATARI 5200

- ☐ 7800 ProSystem Game Adapter .....Atari .....n/a  
*Use this adapter to play ATARI 7800 ProSystem and 2600 cartridges on your 5200*

## ATARI 7800

- ☐ 3-D Asteroids .....Atari .....n/a  
*#CX7802.*
- ☐ Pit-Fighter.....Atari .....n/a
- ☐ Quest For Quintana Roo .....Telegames.....n/a
- ☐ Rampart.....Atari .....n/a
- ☐ Rescue on Fractalus! .....Atari .....n/a  
*#CX7816. REPLACES DPG3 ENTRY.*
- ☐ Road Riot 4WD.....Atari .....n/a
- ☐ Steel Talons .....Atari .....n/a
- ☐ Toki .....Atari .....n/a
- ☐ 7800 Computer Keyboard.....Atari .....n/a  
*A catalog entry reads: "Converts your 7800 ProSystem into e complete home computer. It's even compatible with ATARI XL series accessories like printers, program recorders, and more".*
- ☐ MindLink System .....Atari .....n/a  
*A catalog entry reads: "INTRODUCING THE MindLink SYSTEM/THE STATE OF THE ART - FOR THE STATE OF YOUR MIND/LOOKS LIKE MAGIC - WORKS BY RELAXATION/Atari MindLink lets you control your 2600 or 7800 ProSystem in ways never before possible, by the power of your mind alone. You guide it without moving your hands. MindLink sends electronic impulses from your brain to your game console - with no wires in between. It looks like magic - but works by relaxation. Special cartridges enable you to use MindLink to play exciting new games, to reduce stress with bio-feedback programs, and to explore educational and creative software". To date, the only known software for this system is tne prototype "Bionic Breakthrough".*

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# COLLECTIBLE DUDS

BY KEVIN OLENIACZ

All contemporary systems, from the NES to the Jaguar, have a number of duds in their library. Many are hidden behind attractive graphics. The classics also have their share of wasted computer chips and circuit boards. Since the 2600 has a superior *quantity* of games, it also stands to reason that it has the most carts which offer very low *quality*. No company better exemplifies this than Data Age.

Of their eight 2600 releases, four of them can be candidates for the top twenty worst for this system. *SSSnake*, the most unimaginative of the lot, is a shooter with blocks and misshapen blobs, harsh sounds and one-dimensional gameplay. *Bugs* is an uninspired paddle game. *Warlock* is a very poor copy of *Phoenix* and *Demon Attack*, but with paddles. *Encounter at L-5* is a shameful *Missile Command* clone, except that it lacks the cities, the excitement, and gameplay variety. Mythicon manufactured a trio of unmemorable carts which were labeled "first in a series of..." *Firefly* and *Sorcerer* were similar in design (shoot one enemy and move on to the next screen) while *Star Fox* entails mining crystals while contending with one enemy at a time. The graphics are well designed but the uninspired gameplay drops their value below the \$0.99 I laid out for them at a Kay Bee Toys clearance sale. Activision's initial effort, *Dragster*, is a long screen race from one side of the screen to another. Programmer David Crane rushed this out but later redeemed himself with a few blue ribbon releases. U.S. Games' *M.A.D.* is a pathetic rip-off of *Missile Command*, Tigervision's initial entry, *King Kong*, is a dull single screen platform challenge. Tigervision's *Espial*'s unique backgrounds actually interfere with the action. Poor color coordination doomed this otherwise mediocre shooter.

A variety of trash from the European market found its way onto U.S. stores. Sancho's *Exocet* is a senseless shooter which may be the worst of the lot. It received two incarnations in the U.S. (*Exocet* by Panda and *Cruise Missile* by Froggo - see review) and one in Taiwan (*Radar*). Sancho's *Sea Hawk* is another big time loser. Sancho's *Forest* was released exclusively in Europe. The theme behind this would offend environmentalists and humanitarians alike, as you need to chop down trees and snuff out animals. Puzzy/Bit Corp.'s *Space Tunnel* (Zimag's *Cosmic Corridor*) is one of many extremely lame shooters.

Atari produced its share of wasted efforts. *Swordquest Fireworld* consists of traveling from room to room, dealing with nearly impossible challenges, and picking up and dropping objects in different rooms. *BASIC Programming* is a laughable attempt to replicate a PC's capabilities. The "graphics" merely consist of a square traveling around the screen. *Blackjack* is a one-dimensional simulation. Some of their early sports titles, *Home Run*, *Football* and *Basketball*, barely follow the basic rules of their respective sports. Other carts worth mentioning are Atari's *RealSports Soccer*, Ultravision's *Condor*

*Attack*, Froggo's *Karate*, Telegames' *Universal Chaos*, Apollo's *Skeet Shoot*, and Amiga's mass produced prototype, *Off Your Rocker*, which is based upon the popular game *Simon*.

The only Atari 5200 game worth mentioning is *Miniature Golf*. However, this can be forgiven since this is an unpolished prototype which consists only of lines rather than solid graphics.

The Intellivision version of *The Empire Strikes Back* (Parker Bros.) is a major disappointment in comparison to the excellent 2600 version. The pace crawls at a snail pace. It seems as if the programmer completed the graphics and was halfway through designing the action when he/she gave up on the project and it was released as is. Ditto for *Donkey Kong* (Coleco) which has gameplay that drags on and a playfield that really doesn't resemble the arcade game. Imagic's *Demon Attack* looks attractive but the unforgiving controls kill this version.

Xonox's *Its Only Rock 'N Roll* may be the worst cartridge ever released for the ColecoVision. It's a simple text game that easily could have been programmed in BASIC. Coleco's *Space Fury* is at the bottom of the barrel as far as shooters go. Xonox's *Slurpy* is another bad example of a shooter that isn't any fun to play.

The Vectrex's *Blitz* is a weak simulation of Football, with X's and O's representing the players. Emerson Arcadia's *Grand Slam Tennis* appears to be playing in slow motion, and it's a struggle just to get your players to provide some momentum. Practically all of the Fairchild Channel F games contain sub-standard sounds (monotone blips) and graphics (just blocks), and should never go unmentioned in a "bad" games conversation.

Similarly, over half of the Odyssey2 library can be considered wasted efforts. A majority of these are just plain boring. The worst of the bunch is *Out of This World!*, a lunar lander replica. It's on the same cartridge as *Helicopter Rescue!*, which is a simple race against time, repeating the same action as many times as you can. *War of Nerves!* is a strategy simulation. *Baseball!* is a disgrace to the national pastime. Other miracle cures for insomnia include *Freedom Fighters!* and *Speedway!/Spinout!/Crypto-Logic!*

Don't be discouraged by the classics after reading this column. For every dud, there's an excellent game waiting to fill an afternoon with pleasurable entertainment.



# Classified



## Section

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**WANTED:** 5200 Bounty Bob Strikes Back, Montezuma's Revenge, Tutankham, originals or copies in good shape for which I'll trade my stash of 58 carts, most are 5200, Coleco, Vic-20. Some in original packaging, including 5200 Quest for Quintana Roo, Vic Thorne EMI games, Handheld AD&D LED game from '84, packed into original 5200 box with 5200 manuals. If you can locate these 3 carts, write me @ DG, 1905 Cherokee Road, Ft. Wayne, IN 46808.

**FOR SALE OR TRADE:** The infamous (and difficult to find) Emerson Arcadia 2001, complete with eight games all with boxes and several with overlays and instructions. Everything's here and in full working order, folks, for either \$75 in cash, an SNES with 2 games (a copy of Super Mario World and another of your choice - negotiable), a Vectrex, or anything else of particular interest. Also for sale: a Game Boy with three games for \$30, a 7800 with 3 games & two sticks for \$20, a 5200 and 4 games (no sticks) for \$25, and a variety of Odyssey2, Master System, & 2600 titles for 1/2 the DP Guide values. Finally, **WANTED:** various ColecoVision games and peripherals, Vectrex items, and low-end PC add-ons like low baud modems, 80 meg IDE hard drives, 8-bit sound cards, and what have you. Call or write: Jess Ragan, 8584 Peoples Road, Edmore, MI 48829. (517) 427-5205.

**FOR SALE:** Turbografx-16 turbo chips. \$5 each - Keith Courage, Bonk's Adventure, China Warrior. \$10 each -

Andre Panza Kick Boxing, Battle Royale, Moto Rader. \$15 each - Bloody Wolf, Gunboat. All cases and manuals included. Please include \$1 for shipping. David Weinstein, 15 Lakeside Drive, Marlton, NJ 08053.

**FOR SALE:** Atari 2600 starter kit: includes one joystick, paddle set, and thirteen games. \$25 postpaid; Genesis Warsong sealed \$15; Super NES Adventures of Dr. Franken, Family Dog, Firestriker, Pink Goes to Hollywood \$20 each; 16-bit magazines \$1.50 each, send for list. **WANTED:** Space Invaders '91 for Genesis, Beamrider for 5200, Cakewalk and Demolition Herby for 2600. Kevin Oleniacz, 96 Buena Vista Dr, Ringwood, NJ 07456.

**FOR SALE:** Games for Atari 2600/ 5200/ 7800/ Lynx/ XE, ColecoVision, Vectrex, Intellivision, Fairchild, others. Systems also available. Write for current lists. **WANTED:** Intellivision Congo Bongo, Body Slam Wrestling; Odyssey2 Super Cobra, Popeye, Frogger, Q\*Bert, Videopac games; Vic 20 Super Cobra, Tutankham, Fathom, Atlantis, Wing War, Tac Scan; PC Jr Demon Attack, Microsurgeon, others; ColecoVision Alcazar, Rock N Bolt, Boulder Dash. Edward Villalpando, 13525 Utica St, Whittier, CA 90605.

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### VIDEOS? ANYBODY?

We're really itching to produce a new video tape. At this rate, it doesn't look like "Live From Your Home II" will ever happen. We have a few videos from our readers, but it looks like we'll have to fill in the rest. That's OK, though. We have plenty to show. Anyway, this is your LAST CHANCE. If you want a FREE copy of the final product, you gotta get your video to us before AUGUST 1st. At that point, we're going to produce, no matter what we have from you. So whip out your camcorder, get your dog to play a game of Nobunaga's Ambition. Or something else video game related. You know where we live!

### ELECTRONIC GAMES MAGAZINE BECOMES FUSION

It seems like only minutes ago (actually it was DP #6) when we announced the re-emergence of everyone's favorite video game mag from the pre-Nintendo era, Electronic Games. Then it was DP #23 where we announced that our illustrious editor

had been dismissed from his brief stay as "Relics" columnist for that magazine. Now, Electronic Games is no more. If you have the August 1995 issue, it's the last you'll see with the familiar name on the cover. The staff moves with the tide of the industry, though, and they'll live under the new monniker, Fusion. Fusion appears to be much more hip publication, shedding the classic style for mod style. The premiere cover looks something like the magazine Wired, and I wouldn't be surprised if the content was similar to Flux, a favorite among the staff here. We wish the triumvirate of Katz, Kunkel, and Worley much success with their new project.

### THE ARNMADA

Our old pal Jess Ragan has been busy programming BASIC games for IBM compatibles. His premiere is called "The Armada", a Space Invaders-like shooter featuring another of electronic gaming's personalities, Arnie Katz in the role of the invaders. The graphics are above average for an BASIC game, with non-animated sprites but nicely detailed nonetheless. My 486 needed a little slowing down, as Jess admits his game was coded for 386-based PC's. There are also some neat visuals before the game begins (the title rotates all vector-like into the screen) and when you blow it (a kind of homage to Missile Command's ending?). The game is fun, especially if you can still enjoy the simplicity of a game like Space Invaders. Jess tells us the game is yours for just the cost of a diskette and postage. Let's call it \$2.50. Send to: Jess Ragan, 8584 Peoples Road, Edmore, MI 48829. To play this game on an IBM compatible, you'll need QBASIC, which is standard on most PCs.